IMPROVING EXPRESSION THROUGH AN APPEAL TO INTEREST
IN THE STUDY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM: IMPROVING EXPRESSION THROUGH AN APPEAL TO INTEREST IN THE STUDY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

The discussion of the problem, Improving Expression through an Appeal to Interest in the Study of English Grammar, is an attempt to investigate the ways in which the expression of pupils in secondary schools may be improved by applying recent psychological findings to (1) selecting a suitable standard for usage, (2) presenting the necessary grammatical principles, and (3) using special devices to help maintain interest.

It seems, perhaps, unnecessary to continue discussion of a subject which has been debated for over forty years. A brief survey of the history of the controversy, however, will show that it is a problem yet today.

From 1795, when Murray's English Grammar was published, until about 1900, formal grammar was taught in imitation of Latin grammar. The venerable and now disproved theory of formal discipline was its defense. Francis Shreve reports:

As early as 1905, Hoyt made a survey of the teaching of formal grammar to determine the reasons given for teaching this subject. A consensus of opinion was found to the effect that grammar:

1. Disciplines the mind;
2. Prepares for the study of
other languages;
(3) Gives command of indispensable terminology;
(4) Enables one to use better English;
(5) Aids in the interpretation of literature.¹

Studies were made later to test these aims. One in 1908 by J. M. Wilson, a pioneer in the field, was a brief investigation of oral errors of public-school children of Connersville, Indiana. In 1914 Dr. W. W. Charters examined the oral language of elementary-school children of Kansas City and made some classifications of their errors.² In 1917 Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools, a joint-committee report of the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Education Association, urged that curricula and methods be adopted to high-school pupils' needs rather than to college-entrance requirements.³ These investigations and other reports not only seemed to show that formal grammar has little value but, perhaps what is more important, led to much questioning and discussion as to what is of value in grammar teaching.

The reaction which occurred caused many to draw the illogical conclusion that grammar should be abolished from the school curriculum. Francis Shreve points out:

...this extreme position was indefensible and soon gave way to the saner view that the solu-


tion to the problem was not the elimination of grammar, but the teaching of a different type of grammar ... designated as functional ... made up of the parts of formal or technical grammar that have a direct application to correct usage ... the knowledge of which will enable the pupils to know when they are speaking and writing correctly. 

In 1926 Dr. S. A. Leonard advanced a program in which language was considered as a form of human behavior and advocated a reconstruction of the English course. By 1929 a committee was formed to begin research on the problem which ended in *An Experience Curriculum in English*, published in 1935 by the National Council of Teachers of English. This report, too, emphasized the importance of study and practice in grammar occurring at the point of need and not as an independent segment of work which has no immediate relation to use.

Both of the latter reports are mentioned as representative of the approximate position of English-grammar teaching at the present time, which is somewhere in a middle position between grammar as a set body of principles forming a separate subject in itself and the opposite extreme of no study of grammar at all. However, that middle position seems still to cover a wide range of opinion.

The titles of magazine articles written within the last few years show that the topic is still being discussed.

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Notice such titles as "Grammar: The Swing of the Pendulum,"^6 "On Doing without Grammar" (the implication being that we can not),^7 "Self-Help in Good English Usage,"^8 and "Is English Needed?" (the answer being "Yes" for grammar as well as the other phases of English).^9 An important condition is added to the foregoing titles by ones like the following: "Seeking a Middle Ground,"^10 and "A Dual Approach to Grammar Study,"^11 both of which seem to say, "Grammar? Yes, but with a different approach. Let's teach it to pupils when they are in the process of using language. Let's not make a separate, detached study of it."

Perhaps the discussion has continued because of accusations made in magazine articles and in books which emphasize the fact that the boys and girls who are being graduated from our schools cannot use their native language correctly and effectively. The following are a few such statements selected from the many made:

The data presented in the preceding pages (studies in the elimination of errors made

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year after year) are conflicting so some extent; but, in general, they indicate that the school is only partially succeeding with the problem of the elimination of errors. Some of the studies show little or no decrease in errors from grade to grade; others show a considerable decrease, but nothing even approaching complete success.\(^{12}\)

Most teachers today would agree that the best available evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that our students do not have the control and mastery over language which is essential for fully meeting their needs, and which should therefore be expected from a general education.\(^{13}\)

Having had some experience in teaching classes of adult business women the essentials of English usage, I know that they clamor for commas and rules governing them, for vocabulary, spelling, and for rules governing the use of "who" and "whom." They say if they had been taught the rules, they would not now grope for the right expression. They are spending money for something which it is their right to have learned as graduates of our public high schools in recent years. Have we not swung to the left far enough, and is it not time to steer our course toward a saner middle ground?\(^{14}\)

He (a law student whose errors in written work were almost innumerable) simply never has learned to think in terms of his own written language—which is certainly a very elementary skill, consisting of little more than the power to plan what is written and to see that there is some orderly connection between the ideas set down...The last real opportunity for drill in the fundamentals is in the secondary schools.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{12}\)Shreve, op. cit., pp. 47-8.

\(^{13}\)Progressive Education Association, Language in General Education, p. 54.


\(^{15}\)William L. Prosser, "English as She is Wrote," The English Journal, XXVII (January, 1939), p. 44.
Certainly such criticism presents a challenge and points to the fact that a workable solution to the problem of improving pupils' expression has not been completely developed.

Textbooks and workbooks reflect the indecision concerning the teaching of grammar for, in some instances, their presentation of the subject is very formal yet. A workbook, used widely in the writer's county, in the upper years of her own school, and until last year in her own classes—though with many changes in plan of study—has page after page requiring pupils to classify verbs in long lists of sentences under the four headings: transitive with an object, transitive without an object, intransitive complete, and intransitive copulative. Even though various schemes and devices were used in class to try to get boys and girls to understand the classifications, the distinctions were difficult to keep in mind. No place in the text served to show the pupil what purpose was behind all this work of classifying verbs. Nor could the teacher supply a very good reason. Continually the questions came up, asked sincerely and in good faith, "Why do we have to learn that? What good does it do us?" After a short period of trying to do what was asked and of meeting with failure, the pupils became sloppy in their work, hard to discipline, willing to get answers from someone else instead of working them out themselves, and antagonistic
toward grammar.

It is with this last phase that the present study proposes to deal; namely, how can English grammar be approached in order that pupils may be interested in it and thus may improve their expression? It will concern itself with the problem of how to get pupils to say, "Show me how I can tell what to use," rather than, "Why do I have to study this?"

Grammar study, prompted by such questions, will be functional for it will come at the point when it is needed to prevent an error or to correct one already made. Grammar itself is defined by Seely as "a logical arrangement of the conventionally accepted principles of word functions, relations, and usage."16 To be functional, it must be "divested of all needless statements concerning syntax and all those classifications of words, phrases, clauses and sentences that are of no practical use in everyday speech and writing."17

An example may serve to make clearer this conception of grammar. Some teachers still have pupils classifying nouns as common or proper, concrete or abstract. The only one of these four items that is functional is that of the proper noun. The pupil needs that conception in order to capitalize correctly. Why confuse him with the terms


"common," "concrete," and "abstract"? The distinctions they represent are not needed in writing and certainly not in speaking.

Functional grammar as defined above should be more interesting than formal grammar with its body of needless principles. Before discussing means of appealing to pupils' interest, however, it is necessary to turn to the field of psychology for information concerning the part interest plays in learning. Chapter Two, therefore, will contain a discussion of some principles of interest.

In acquainting pupils with the fact that language varies with time and social groups, much can be found that will appeal to their interest. The problem of selecting a standard of correct usage will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four will list the principles of grammar that are really functional in character. A suitable method of presenting these principles will be outlined. Since habit controls a large part of our oral expression, and to a less extent our written expression, a discussion of habit formation will be included.

Chapter Five will contain some special devices that may be used to help arouse and maintain interest in the study of grammar.

Chapter Six will be a summary of the preceding chapters.
CHAPTER II

SOME PRINCIPLES OF INTEREST

Before it is possible to say why an activity appeals to an individual's interest, it is necessary to define the word "interest" for it is a word having many meanings. Since the term is used in connection with educational activities, it is important also to ascertain the part interest plays in the learning process.

What is "interest"? We say, "That theory or that picture interests us." What do we mean? To what was the boy referring when upon returning a book to the library he commented, "There's an interesting book. Why, I even took it with me to the skating rink last night and instead of skating I read it most of the time"? On the other hand, statements such as the following are frequently heard, "I guess I'll give up stamp collecting. It doesn't interest me anymore." A consideration of these expressions points to the conclusion that interest is connected with one's feelings and that it seems to denote a pleasant experience.

What do psychologists say interest is? John J. B. Morgan defines it as "the excitement or feeling accompanying special attention to some object."¹ Charles

De Garmo makes an arresting observation when he agrees that interest is a feeling but that "this, like all feelings, is not to be defined. It is only to be felt. More precisely, it is a feeling of the worth, to the self, of an end to be attained."\(^2\) The explanation is carried further by Floyd L. Ruch: "The word 'interest' is usually used by psychologists in a positive sense. That is, if the feeling which goes with the performance of some particular activity is pleasant, we say that the individual is interested in that activity."\(^3\)

What connection does interest, a feeling of pleasant excitement in an activity or a sense of worth to the self, have with the learning process? It is generally agreed that interest is necessary for most effective learning. "Ideal human life is happy; and the schoolman believes that the child's preparation for it should be, as far as possible, pleasurable. There is good psychology back of this, the psychology which asserts that the mind loves to retain those concepts which it has joy in getting."\(^4\)

When a child is held to an activity in which he has no interest, his attention is gradually divided; he thinks of more pleasant things, neglects his work, pretends that he is working, and may develop dishonest means of meeting the teacher's requirements. "He weakens his

\(^2\)Charles De Garmo, *Interest and Education*, p. 28.
\(^3\)Floyd L. Ruch, *Psychology and Life*, p. 88.
\(^4\)Lucile F. Fargo, *The Library in the School*, p. 16.
moral nature, he tends constantly toward deception and hypocrisy.\(^5\)

It is the teacher's duty, therefore, to see to it that the activity in which the pupil is engaged is conducted in such a manner that his interest is aroused and maintained. The teacher must, in other words, motivate his pupils:

Motivation is the \textit{sine qua non} of learning.... For the purpose of stimulating learning, it is unnecessary to distinguish—even if it were possible—original from acquired motivations. It is essential for the teacher to know what "springs to action" might be unleashed in a given individual, and how to capitalize them by the situation at hand.\(^6\)

These seemingly general statements that better motivation produces better learning are not mere deductions from common observations. They are "borne out by experimental work with animals and human beings."\(^7\)

Since it has been found that interest is essential to learning, the next step is to discover some of the principles that will help create interest or that "pleasant feeling" while the individual is engaged in a learning activity. A word of warning, however, is necessary for "simple all-or-none rules of motivation cannot be set forth."\(^8\) Suggestions only can be offered which the

\(^5\)Paul Thomas Young, \textit{Motivation of Behavior}, p. 2.


\(^7\)Raymond B. Cattell, \textit{General Psychology}, p. 361.

teacher may use advantageously by adopting them to his own situation, which includes the pupils, the activity in which he is engaged, the material to be learned, and even the teacher's personality and ability.

What then are some of the factors involved in an activity that tend to make it interesting?

First, as has already been indicated, if an activity has meaning for an individual and is considered worthwhile by him, it is much more likely to be interesting. This is the same as saying that an activity should be either a desired end in itself or a means to an end the individual sees ahead of him. It would be much more interesting to an individual to build a brick walk from his back door to his garage over the spot that always becomes muddy when it rains, than it would be to lay bricks across the back yard where the sod prevents mud from forming and where he never needs to walk anyway. The former activity would have a worthy goal; the latter, none. Definiteness also is an important factor of interest as David Ryans implies when he discusses assignments as goals:

Definite objectives are necessary if motivation is to be effective. Not only the difficulty of an assignment, but its length and definiteness, as well, are important considerations from the standpoint of motivation. Distant goals, where attainment is more desired than anticipated, are not generally considered to be so useful as incentives as are more
immediate goals. Assignments should never be vague; standards or requirements should be definitely stated; and the length of the assignment should be such that it is reasonable to expect its completion.\footnote{Ibid., p. 325.}

One principle of motivation is, therefore, that meaningful and definite goals contribute to interest.

A second and closely related principle is that those activities which are within an individual's level of intelligence and abilities tend to interest him most. Paul Thomas Young lists "innate capacity" as one of the two factors which play a dominant role in directing the channels of interest.\footnote{Young, op. cit., p. 323.} The same factor is listed by Ruch, who claims: "...those activities which are easy for the individual are likely to be the most interesting. For example, if you have a high native ability for music, you are more likely to find music interesting than is the individual who is born with poor musical aptitude."\footnote{Ruch, op. cit., pp. 88-9.} On the other hand, as John Dewey points out, an activity can be too easy for the individual to hold his interest. "It is not too much to say that a normal person demands a certain amount of difficulty to surmount in order that he may have a full and vivid sense of what he is about, and hence have a lively interest in what he is doing."\footnote{John Dewey, Interest and Effort in Education, p. 52.}
experience, especially if that experience has been suc-
cessful, is another source of interest. This factor,
designated as "skills acquired through learning," is the
second one of Young's list, mentioned above. No one
can deny the importance of the element of success as
a factor in spurring an individual on to trying again
and to enjoying the activity. A boy playing at a piano
recital and doing it outstandingly well is going to be
much more inclined to perform again and to receive pleas-
ure from performing than he is if his first attempt is
a poor one. Ryans warns of one danger, however, that
may result from too close adherence to this principle:

Learning should proceed whenever possible,
perhaps, in relation to existing interests.
However, it should be remembered that
interests are themselves learned and that
learning, using individual interests as
its starting point, must be carefully
directed so as to extend well beyond the
original interest field. Otherwise, the
desirable breadth of experience may be
considerably limited.13

A fourth important factor of interest is social
approval. Congratulations offered to the boy described
above after the recital will serve to spur him on even
more than his own knowledge that he has done well.
Ruch explains the effect of approval or praise on human
behavior thus:

The conditions of our daily living are such
that the satisfaction of our fundamental
physiological drives (internal stimulation
leading to general body activity) becomes
associated with objects which, in the pro-

13 Ryans, op. cit., pp. 312-3.
cess, acquire a power to satisfy higher motives and come to be sought after as much or even more than the immediate physiological satisfactions themselves. Of all the objects which acquire the power to serve as substitute satisfactions, the approving human being is the most important. Thus we develop the desire for social approval and self-respect—the greatest guiding forces in civilized living.14

Rewards in the classroom, whether they are prizes, exemptions from work, special permissions, or words of praise for work well done, are all marks of social approval. One must agree as to the worth of praise to the slow or timid child. Even the best are encouraged by the approval of their group as is shown by the following excerpt of an item written for a school paper by an above-average student, who volunteered to write the item when the class was asked for news about what they had been doing in English class: "We have liked the first estimate of English very much. Why? Well, have you ever written a story or a poem? Have you ever had either of them read and liked? We have written both and have had them liked, too. That's why. You know, everyone likes to be praised for work well done."

On the other hand, praise can be of dubious value if it is applied to persons who do not deserve it or if it is used repeatedly with the same individual. A pupil usually can recognize whether or not his work merits praise so that he can detect insincerity. If he does not realize that his work is inferior, he is well on his way

14Ruch, op. cit., pp. 92-3.
to becoming satisfied with mediocre performances. If his work is superior and he is praised unduly, his progress may stop at that level or he may even become snobbish about what he can do. Using expressions of recognition, in other words, is a matter of judgment although the person who is in position to judge should remember that more advancement has been made backed by commendation than by adverse criticism or by no approval at all.

Making the pupil aware of his improvement is another means of holding his interest. Everyone feels happier when he knows he is progressing. This principle, of course, ties in with others, especially those emphasizing the importance of the pupil's engaging in activities within the reach of his ability and of having well-defined and meaningful goals. It is listed separately merely to emphasize the importance of letting the individual know he is progressing.

A sixth activity that increases interest is competition for it does affect learning. "The situation involving rivalry is conducive to greater effort on the part of the individual." It is, however, pointed out that competition among students is often incompatible with a democratic philosophy and that cooperation is a better way of life. A teacher should use his judgment, of course. When he sees that rivalry has passed the point where pupils can be friends and be willing to work together on other projects, it is time to eliminate competition. "It is not unreasonable, however, to assume that a certain degree

of competition is acceptable in learning situations and that it does not necessarily negate the teachings of democracy. A realistic view might attempt to reconcile rather than mutually exclude competition and cooperation."16 A substitute for competition among the group may very well be competition with oneself, which is the same principle as that of making the pupil aware of his progress. Another substitution may be group competition wherein the entire group competes with the record it has made at some previous time.

One psychologist, T. H. Briggs, found that when students were asked to list what they considered made a class interesting, they listed among other items already discussed in this study "liking the teacher" as important.17 The logical conclusion would be then that a teacher should give attention to discovering which personality traits pupils generally like and which they dislike. There have been several studies attempting to discover the qualities of good and poor teachers. William Wrinkle and Robert Gilchrist refer to one made by Frank W. Hart, who asked 10,000 seniors in 66 different high schools to list, first, their reasons for liking their best-liked teacher and, second, their reasons for disliking the teacher they liked least. He tabulated 4,000 responses. The chief reasons given for liking the best-liked teacher best were as follows:

(1) He is helpful with school work, explains

16 Ibid., pp. 322-3.
17 Ibid., p. 324.
lessons and assignments clearly and thoroughly, and uses examples in teaching.

(2) He is cheerful, happy, and good-natured; he has a sense of humor and can take a joke.

(3) He is human, friendly, and companionable; he is one of us.

(4) He is interested in and understands pupils.

(5) He makes work interesting, creates a desire to work, and makes classwork a pleasure.

(6) He is strict, has control of the class, and commands respect.

(7) He is impartial, shows no favoritism, and has no pets.

(8) He is not cross, crabby, grouchy, nagging, or sarcastic.

(9) We learned the subject.

The chief reasons given for disliking the teacher who was liked least of all were as follows:

(1) He is too cross, crabby, grouchy and never smiles; he nags, is sarcastic, loses his temper, and flies off the handle.

(2) He is not helpful with schoolwork, does not explain lessons and assignments, is not clear, and does not plan his work.

(3) He is partial, has pets, and picks on certain pupils.

(4) He is superior, aloof, haughty, snooty, overbearing, and does not know you out of class.

(5) He is mean, hard-boiled, intolerant, ill-mannered, too strict, and makes life miserable.

(6) He is unfair in marking and grading and unfair in tests and examinations.

(7) He is inconsiderate of pupils' feelings and bawls out pupils in presence of classmates;
pupils are afraid and ill at ease, and dread his class.

(8) He is not interested in pupils and does not understand them.

(9) He makes unreasonable assignments.

(10) He is too loose in discipline, has no control of the class, and does not command respect.\(^\text{18}\)

Since these traits were given by pupils and since most of them were given by over one-half the students, they offer valuable suggestions to a teacher.

Discovery and problem-solving seem to give more satisfaction than formal drill and memorization.\(^\text{19}\)

Everyone has experienced the feeling of elation that comes after he has seen a problem, looked for material to solve it, sifted facts, perhaps added new ones, and finally has found the answer. Such a procedure is far more interesting than mere repetition until material is learned.

Two more conditions that add to interest may be enumerated. One is a class in which pupils are allowed to participate actively. This fact can be substantiated by the testimony of almost anyone who has had the experience of sitting in the two types of classes, the one where the instructor lectures or directs all the classwork without allowing for student comment or suggestion, and the other where students are encouraged to participate and even to help plan the class activities. The younger the pupil is the more applicable is the principle that activity is more


\(^{19}\)Gates, op. cit., p. 317.
pleasant than passiveness.

The other condition involves a time element. Pupils will approach an assignment with much more enthusiasm if no time elapses between the period of motivation and the time they actually start working on an assignment. Who has not put off answering a letter, for instance, until the task looms big and almost forbidding before him? If he had just started writing soon after receiving the letter he is to answer, the task would not be so uninteresting to approach. A further observation may be included at this point; namely, after the activity is once started, interest in it grows. A housewife dislikes to leave the family in the living-room to go to the kitchen to do the dinner dishes. Yet, when she starts washing and drying them, her pleasure in a clean kitchen and shining glassware makes the task not so unpleasant after all.

Before making a summary of the factors that make an activity interesting, it is well to discuss one other danger of motivation. It has already been pointed out that competition may reach the point where it is incompatible with democracy and that rewards and praise should not be indiscriminately used. The other danger that has been emphasized by some is that of the learner working for the incentive. This danger would apply particularly to motivation derived from social approval, rewards, and competition. Ryan discussed this point:

Many educators have felt that the only worth-while motivation is so-called "intrinsic" mo-
tivation and that emphasis upon the end (an incentive) rather than on the means (the learning) of attaining the end is undesirable. Statements regarding the desirability of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation are, of course, largely matters of opinion. It may be true that intrinsic motivation is more generally and permanently effective than is learning for some material reward. However, it is the behavior that is being acquired, the learning that is taking place, that is most important. So long as the desired learning does take place and becomes available for application in the individual's life activities, the incentive which was used to stimulate the learning is, perhaps, of relatively little significance.20

In summary, then, "interest" may be defined as a feeling of excitement or pleasantness accompanying special attention to an object or activity. Interest is stimulated by:

1. An activity that is a worthy and definite goal itself or a means to a goal an individual has set for himself.

2. An activity which is at the individual's level of intelligence neither too much above nor below.

3. An activity in which the individual has had previous experience, especially if it has been successful experience.

4. Social approval or other forms of rewards discriminately given.

5. The awareness on the part of the individual that he is advancing.

6. An activity involving competition provided the rivalry involved does not destroy democratic ideals.

20Ryans, op. cit., p. 322.
7. A teacher whose personality traits are pleasing.
8. A problem-solving situation rather than one involving formal drill and memorization.
9. A class in which there is active participation of pupils and teachers working cooperatively.
10. The beginning of a task at the time of motivation not sometime later.

These principles of motivation are essential to learning for they "provide opportunities for the teacher to teach; their employment in learning marks the difference between a teacher and a textbook, or between a good teacher and a poor teacher." 21

The following chapters will contain suggestions as to how they may be adapted to the problem of improving expression through the study of English grammar.

21 Ibid., pp. 321-2.
CHAPTER III
SELECTING A STANDARD OF USAGE

... a woman, a college professor, had been shopping for gloves of a rare variety. The salesman, after vain searchings, produced at last the desired article, with an unctuous, "Are not these they?" It was too much even for my punctilious friend. "Yes, them's thum." ¹

How many could have resisted making a similar answer? Isn't it true that some expressions, sanctioned by grammarians, tend to make one feel uncomfortable when using them? Aren't there times when it seems easier to say, for instance, "You are older than me," instead of "You are older than I"? Why is it difficult to remember to use "as" in place of "like" in the following: "Do it like he told you"? Who hasn't found himself at the end of a sentence with a preposition left on his hands?

Pupils, in their questions about the purpose of grammar, often show they are confused by the same problems. They claim with good reason that they can understand, "Who did you come with?" as easily as "With whom did you come?" Why should they be so careful?

Furthermore teachers, in their zeal to make sure their always speak correctly, even go so far as to overteach:

Children who say, "It's me," "That's him," "Was that him or us?" may, after years of effort, get to saying, "It's I," etc. But

¹Percival Chubb, The Teaching of English, p. 320.
how many of them learn entirely too much, even beyond this too much! They develop a notion or a feeling that "me," "us," "him," etc. are improper; and then they stuff "I" and "we" and "he" in everywhere. Not many of them are articulate enough to say with one young lady, "Why do I always feel it is vulgar to use "me" anywhere?" ²

Henry Aldridge must be suffering from the same malady; else why does he say with so much evident pride in the thought that he is correct, "Were you calling I, Mother?"

No wonder pupils lose interest in the study of a subject that forces upon them expressions so divorced from their own natural way of speaking! Perhaps they may take consolation from an observation like the following. At least their teachers may profit by the suggestion as they make corrections of their pupils:

*It is an amusing if somewhat disillusioning game, which may be played with almost any book or article one may chance to read, to take apart minutely a sentence or paragraph, checking on every detail of the words and the grammar. It is rare indeed that such analysis will fail to yield some peculiarity, or even some definite flaw, in order, wording, or punctuation. Such authorities as Ernest Weekley, G. O. Curme, and many others have made collections of the more outstanding flaws and presented them for public perusal, thereby giving the erroneous impression that the authors were defective in their knowledge of English and that wholly perfect English can or should be written. It cannot, even by Curme and Weekley themselves.* ³


³Margaret M. Bryant and Janet Aiken, *Psychology of English*, p. 12.
Why can't perfect English be written? Why does such confusion as to what is correct exist? There is a good reason:

Any approach to the problem of "correctness" today must be cognizant of the dual nature of language tradition. There is, on the one hand, the tradition of the living, spoken language, based upon the phenomena of actual usage; on the other hand, there survives the tradition of authority, based upon the classics of literature and the rules of grammarians.  

Let us consider the proper relation of these two traditions. Not many realize that grammar after all is not a dictum from on high but that language came first and grammar, a set of rules about that language, came afterwards to serve as a guide. Since language changes, therefore the guide must change.

The plain people, hereafter as in the past, will continue to make their own language, and the best that grammarians can do is to follow after it, haltingly, and not often with much insight into it. Their lives would be more comfortable if they ceased to repine over it, and instead gave it some hard study. It is very amusing, and not a little instructive.

Too often this relationship of grammar to language is not realized in English classes.

Nor is another aspect of the problem realized, namely, the extent to which language can go if it is given a chance. H. L. Mencken emphasizes this point by a quotation from another writer, Dr. Krapp:


If English is to be a continuously progressive creation ... then it must escape from the tyranny of the reason and must regain some of the freedom of impulse and emotion which must have been present in the primitive creative origins of language.... Suppose the children of this generation and of the next were permitted to cultivate expressiveness instead of fineness of speech, were praised and promoted for doing something interesting, not for doing something correct and proper. If this should happen, as indeed it is already beginning to happen, the English language and literature would undergo such a renaissance as they have never known.

If this position is accepted, teachers will consider the thought content of pupils' papers and oral work first and grammar second as a means to clarifying and expressing thought. This position does not mean that grammar will not be taught; it does mean that grammar will be considered in its proper place.

Pupils may be interested in some anecdotes about the struggle that has gone on in the growth of language to get certain expressions accepted. At least they can know that the problem is not just theirs alone; plenty of others are bothered by it. One such anecdote is the following:

When a few years ago, a fresh effort to police the national speech habits was begun at Columbia University, the editor of the Petersburg, V., Progress-Index replied as follows:

One of the expressions listed in the indictment of the savants is he don't, a contraction, of course, of he does not. Here in Virginia

many men of the highest education
use the phrase habitually. Their
ancestors have used it for many
generations, and it might be argued
with some reason that when the
best brains of Virginia use an
expression for so long a time it
becomes correct....

The retort that the New York Sun made to a similar accusa-
tion shows in a humorous way the uselessness of fighting
doubtful usages:

In September, 1922, the novelist, Meredith
Nicholson, joined in the jehad against it
(different than) in a letter to the New York
Herald:

Within a few years the abominable
phrase different than has spread
through the country like a pesti-
lence. In my own Indiana, where
the wells of English undefiled
are jealously guarded, the infec-
tion has awakened general alarm.

To which the New York Sun, a few days later,
replied sensibly:

The excellent tribe of grammarians,
the precisians and all others who
strive to be correct and correctors,
have as much power to prohibit a
single word or phrase as a gray
squirrel has to put out Orign
with a flicker of its tail.

It is instructive to see the change in attitude that
can come in some members of a class after they realize
that even they play a part in forming language and conse-
quently grammar. They like to speculate as to whether or
not enough people will eventually use the expression "Ain't
I," for instance, to make it acceptable. Such speculation

7Ibid., p. 446.
8Ibid., p. 473.
may lead them to the question of why we have a standard at all. A series of statements for usage is necessary. Its very conservatism is what helps us to understand each other. The important fact is that, while we need the standard for the sake of comprehension, that standard must not be so rigid that it cannot adapt itself to natural language growth. Once a pupil reaches this realization, he is likely to be more willing to accept the importance of a standard. "He is not being forced to obey something as remote as the Law of the Medes and Persians, but is, rather, attempting to keep step with his associates. He comes to see that if man at large employ certain symbols in certain ways to express certain ideas, he too would do well to use them in the same ways if he would be clearly understood by his fellows."9

The real problem is how to determine just when an expression previously unaccepted becomes accepted. There is no set rule, of course, as to the number of times it has to be used or the number of people who have to use it. There are, however, certain means available that can help us.

Dr. S. A. Leonard, referred to in Chapter One, did pioneer work in attempting to find out what various judges had observed about the actual use or non-use by cultivated persons of a large number of expressions usually condemned in English textbooks and classes. He submitted a list of 230 such expressions to a group of 229 judges, composed of linguistic specialists, editors, authors, business men, and

teachers of English and speech. The judges were asked to place the various expressions into one of three categories according to their observation of what usage is rather than their opinion of what usage ought to be. The three categories under which the items were listed were labeled established, disputable, and illiterate. A list of the expressions submitted follows, arranged according to the judges' opinions of what they had observed:

A. Established Usages

1. A Tale of Two Cities is an historical novel.
2. It was I that broke the vase, father.
3. Why pursue a vain hope?
4. One rarely enjoys one's luncheon when one is tired.
5. The invalid was able partially to raise his body.
6. It behooves them to take action at once.
7. I had rather go at once.
8. In this connection, I should add...
9. This is a man... I used to know. (Omitted relative.)
10. You had better stop that foolishness.
11. Each person should of course bear his or her share of the expense.
12. Galileo discovered that the earth moved.
13. This hat is not so large as mine.
14. My position in the company was satisfactory from every point of view.
15. He toils to the end that he may amass wealth.
16. In the case of students who elect an extra subject, an additional fee is charged.
17. The defendant's case was hurt by this admission.
18. I for one hope he will be there.
19. This is the chapter whose contents cause most discussion.
20. Under these circumstances I will concede the point.
21. I have no prejudices, and that is the cause of my unpopularity.
22. You may ask whosoever you please.
23. The honest person is to be applauded.
24. He stood in front of the class to speak.
25. This much is certain.
26. He did not do as well as we expected.
27. We got home at three o'clock.
28. He has no fear; nothing can confuse him.
29. There is a large works near the bridge.
30. As regards the League, let me say...
31. "You just had a telephone call." "Did they leave any message?"
32. I was attacked by one of those huge police dogs.
33. The women were all dressed up.
34. This was the reason why he went home.
35. This book is valueless, that one has more to recommend it. (Comma splice)
36. Take two cups of flour.
37. None of them are here.
38. I drove the car around the block.
39. He doesn't do it the way I do.
40. The New York climate is healthiest in fall.
41. I felt I could walk no further.
42. One is not fit to vote at the age of eighteen.
43. Our catch was pretty good.
44. We have made some progress along these lines.
45. The catcher stands back of the home plate.
46. My colleagues and I shall be glad to help you.
47. I went immediately into the banquet room, which was, I found later, a technical error.
48. That will be all right, you may be sure.
49. We cannot discover from whence this rumor emanates.
50. We will try and get it.
51. I can hardly stand him.
52. Jane was home all last week.
53. I'd like to make a correction.
54. I've absolutely got to go.
55. We can expect the commission to at least protect our interests.
56. That's a dangerous curve; you'd better go slow.
57. There are some nice people here.
58. Will you be at the Browns' this evening?
59. Have you fixed the fire for the night?
60. I don't know if I can.
61. In hopes of seeing you, I asked...
62. It says in the book that...
63. If it wasn't for football, school life would be dull.
64. His attack on my motives made me peevish.
65. We taxied to the station to catch the train.
66. We only had one left.
67. My viewpoint on this is that we ought to make concessions.
68. Factories were mostly closed on election day.
69. He moves mighty quick on a tennis court.
70. He stopped to price some flowers.
71. He worked with much snap.
72. This room is awfully cold.
73. It is me.
74. Who are you looking for?
75. A treaty was concluded between the four powers.
76. You had to have property to vote, in the eighteenth century.
77. The kind of apples you mean are large and sour.
78. I have a heap of work to do.
79. I felt badly about his death.
80. The real reason he failed was because he tried to do too much.
81. Invite whoever you like to the party.
82. Drive slow down that hill!
83. Harry was a little shaver about this tall.
84. I didn't speak to my uncle by long distance; I couldn't get through.
85. They had numerous strikes in England.
86. I will go, providing you keep away.
87. I have got my own opinion on that.
88. He made a date for next week.
89. My father walked very slow down the street.
90. There was a bed, a dresser, and two chairs in the room.
91. They invited my friends and myself.
92. It is now plain and evident why he left.
93. I wish I was wonderful.
94. I've no doubt but what he will come.
95. What was the reason for Bennett making that disturbance?
96. Can I be excused from this class?
97. Haven't you got through yet?
98. Everyone was here, but they all went home early.
99. He loaned me his skates.
100. My folks sent me a check.
101. He came around four o'clock.
102. If it had been us, we would admit it.
103. They went way around by the orchard road.
104. The banker loaned me $200 at 6%.
105. Pike's peak is in Colorado.
106. The sailors laid out along the yards.
107. Is your insurance sufficient coverage for your house?

B. Disputable Usages

108. That clock must be fixed.
109. My contention has been proven many times.
110. Sam, who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days.
111. One rarely likes to do as he is told.
112. He never works evenings or Sundays.
113. They have gotten a new car this year.
114. The Rock Island depot burned down last night.
115. Sitting in back of John, he said, "Now guess what I have."
116. I took it to be they.
117. I guess I'll go to lunch.
118. He went right home and told his father.
119. He could write as well or better than I.
120. I expect he knows his subject.
121. I can't seem to get this problem right.
122. I was pretty mad about it.
123. Either of these three roads is good.
124. You are older than me.
125. What are the chances of them being found out?
126. There is a big woods behind the house.
127. I know it to be he.
128. Do you wish for some ice cream?
129. Intoxication is when the brain is affected by certain stimulants.
130. Neither of your reasons are really valid.
131. He dove off the pier.
132. Trollope's novels have already begun to date.
133. Will you go? Sure.
134. He is kind of silly, I think.
135. I will probably come a little late.
136. That was the reason for me leaving school.
137. They eat (et) dinner at twelve o'clock.
138. I'll swear that was him.
139. Well, that's going some.
140. Leave me alone, or else get out.
141. Of two disputants, the warmest is generally in the wrong.
142. It was good and cold when I came in.
143. We haven't but a few left.
144. In the collision with a Packard, our car naturally got the worse of it.
145. I wouldn't have said that if I had thought it would have shocked her.
146. Yourself and your guests are invited.
147. The man was very amused.
148. Such naïf actions seem to me absurd.
149. It seems to be them.
150. Everybody bought their own ticket.
151. Say, do you know who that is?
152. I suppose that's him.
153. I can't help but eat it.
154. Aren't (Int or rnt) I right?
155. There is a row of beds with a curtain between each bed.
156. If I asked him, he would likely refuse.
157. John didn't do so bad this time.
158. Cities and villages are being stripped of all they contain not only, but often of their very inhabitants.
159. Everybody's else affairs are his concern.
160. It don't make any difference what you think.
161. I read in the paper where a plane was lost.
162. That boy's mischievous behavior aggravates me.
163. That stock market collapse left me busted.
164. Neither author nor publisher are subject to censorship.
165. Yes, our plan worked just fine.
166. The fire captain with his loyal men were cheered.
167. Don't get these kind of gloves.
168. The British look at this differently than we do.
169. Most anybody can do that.
170. It is liable to snow tonight.
171. They went in search for the missing child.
172. I suppose I'm wrong, ain't I?
173. John was raised by his aunt.
174. Martha don't sew as well as she used to.
175. He most always does what his wife tells him.
176. It sure was good to see Uncle Charles.
177. My experience on the farm helped me some, of course.
178. It's real cold today.
179. His presence was valueless not only, but a hindrance as well.
180. We don't often see sunsets like they have in the tropics.
181. I am older than him.
182. She leaped off of the moving car.
183. She sung very well.
184. It is only a little ways farther.
185. It looked like they meant business.
186. Do it like he tells you.
187. The child was weak, due to improper feeding.

C. Uncultivated or Illiterate Usages

188. John had awoken much earlier than usual.
189. I haven't hardly any money.
190. The engine was hitting good this morning.
191. The dessert was made with whip cream.
192. Now just where are we at?
193. The kitten mews whenever it wants in.
194. A woman whom I know was my friend spoke next.
195. He drunk too much ice water.
196. Reverend Johnson will preach.
197. All came except she.
198. The party who wrote that was a scholar.
199. My Uncle John, he told me a story.
200. He begun to make excuses.
201. I calculate to go soon.
202. This is all the further I can read.
203. That ain't so.
204. The data is often inaccurate.
205. He looked at me and says...
206. I must go and lay down.
207. Ain't that just like a man?
208. Both leaves of the drawbridge raise at once.
209. The people which were here have all gone.
210. I have drank all my milk.
211. That there rooster is a fighter.
212. The old poodle was to no sense agreeable.
213. One of my brothers were helping me.
214. I enjoy wandering among a library.
215. A light complected girl passed.
216. I want for you to come at once.
217. He won't leave me come in.
218. There was a orange in the dish.
219. It was dark when he came in.
220. You was mistaken about that, John.
221. I wish he hadn't of come.
222. Hadn't you ought to ask your mother?
223. My cold wa'nt any better next day.
224. If John had of come, I needn't have.
225. I had hardly laid down again when the phone rang.
226. He did noble.
227. Somebody run past just as I opened the door.
228. Just set down and rest awhile.
229. The neighbors took turns setting up with him.
230. They swung their partners in the reel.\(^\text{10}\)

Dr. Leonard's study was published in 1932. Later, in 1938, Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, realizing the importance of his study, felt much more could be gained by displaying side by side with the opinions Leonard collected the record of usage of each item included in the original study. They went to the available compilations of recorded usage: the *Oxford Dictionary* and its supplement, Jesperson's *Modern English Grammar*, Curme's *Parts of Speech and Accidence*, Hall's *English Usage*, and Pooley's *Grammar and Usage in Textbooks on English*. Their survey uncovered an interesting fact; namely, the opinion expressed in Leonard's study is conservative compared with the recorded facts of usage:

The most significant aspect of these conclusions lies in the relatively few colloquialisms to be found in the "established" group. In compiling the results of the judges' ballots, Leonard and his associates counted as "established" those items which 75 percent or more of the judges had marked as appropriate to formal literary or colloquial English. A survey of actual usage, however, shows that even of the thirty-five most dubious of the "established" items, only six are restricted to the colloquial or informal level. Thus we have our first inkling of the conservatism of opinion when compared with the recorded

\(^{10}\)Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, *Facts about Current English Usage*, pp. 4-11.
facts of usage.  

We may conclude, then, first of all, that the teacher is not only safe in accepting the so-called "established" usages of the Leonard report, but there are seven chances out of eight that a "disputable" item is wholly current in standard English as well. Nor is there, from the evidence, any reason to suspect that these 106 items (of the 121 rated as "disputable" in Leonard's study) are to be considered particularly inelegant. In other words, the teacher may advise his pupils to avoid the "disputable" usages if he wishes to. That is his privilege. But his censure of these expressions cannot be on the basis that they are not to be found at present on the pages of reputable writers or in the mouths of cultivated speakers. 

Careful reference to Leonard's list of usages and to further study of Marckwardt and Walcott should be made by teachers of English. Many speech habits that they have heretofore been conscientiously trying to eliminate from pupils' usage may be in keeping with the natural trend of language and accepted by authorities. Certainly it is a more honest view to present to students and one which should be more agreeable to them.

Arthur G. Kennedy adds two more tests to those already discussed that help determine whether or not a doubtful expression should be used. They are logical considerations and esthetic considerations. He discusses logical considerations first:

When authorities disagree and writers of both the present and the past fail to give comfort and aid to the anxious inquirer, it is sometimes possible to reason out a perplexing problem of English usage and, by setting forth such arguments for and against

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11Ibid., p. 32.
12Ibid., p. 50.
as may be worthy of consideration, arrive at an acceptable personal solution.... In the matter of splitting or not splitting the infinitive, for instance, the placing of the adverb determines largely where the emphasis is to be laid; if the adverb is placed before the to, as in "He prepared thoroughly to reform the organization" there is uncertainty as to whether thoroughly modifies the preceding verb or the following infinitive; and if the adverb is placed after the infinitive, a greater emphasis is placed upon it. Consequently it seems to some writers desirable to place it between the infinitive and its sign, in order to avoid ambiguity and overemphasis. Logical considerations must be invoked, since formal arbitrary practice has not been established. 13

The esthetic test of usage is a consideration of whether an expression is awkward or pleasing. It is generally a personal feeling and, "as such, should be invoked only when all other tests have failed, although it is true that there are some kinds of aversions that are more generally felt than others." 14 Kennedy takes up the split infinitive again as an illustration: "...writers on the subject of the split infinitive insist that it is nearly always awkward, and for that reason it is not to be encouraged." 14 The use of the word "awkward" may "well be challenged on the ground that the authors of the text do not like it because they have been taught not to like it." 15 Kennedy continues in defense of the esthetic test of usage:

At any rate, it scarcely needs to be said... that style in speech and writing, as it shows

14 Ibid., p. 125.
15 Ibid., p. 126.
in...the nice choice and use of words and phrases, is determined in a very large measure by esthetic considerations and consequently transcends in many instances the rules that have been established for good usage by the authorities, employed by other writers, recorded in linguistic history, and even dictated by logical considerations.... The very fact that Aren't I is commonly used by speakers of cultivated British English, and that, in addition, it does not sound vulgar like Ain't I, the really logical contraction in the first person, has led some Americans to adopt it as a solution of an otherwise seemingly insolvable problem.16

Sometimes it is necessary for an individual to adapt his language to fit the social situation in which he finds himself. One teacher reported to the writer how the eyes of some of her pupils opened when she remarked in class, "There are times when you won't want to use the very best grammar you know." What an idea for a teacher to express! She gave them an example: "Suppose you are talking to an older person, your grandparent or a neighbor whom you like. Perhaps that person doesn't use good language forms and has never had the opportunity to learn what you have learned. Would you repeat after him in case it was necessary to use the same expression, the corrected form of an error he had made? What would be his reaction?" Using such an illustration gives a human touch to grammar study.

Different writers have listed the levels of social usage under different headings. H. L. Mencken quotes another writer, Logan Pearsall Smith, who points out that there are at least four distinct varieties of English:

16Ibid., pp. 126-8.
The first is "the language of colloquial talk, with its expletives, easy idioms, and a varying amount of slang." Second comes "the vernacular of good conversation, more correct, more dignified, and entirely, or almost entirely, free from slang." Then comes written prose, "which is richer in vocabulary and somewhat more old-fashioned in construction than the spoken language," and finally there is the language of poetry.17

A suggestion which seems to hold possibilities of interesting pupils in levels of usage is given by Ruth Strong in an article in the English Journal. She sets up four levels:

1. Bad grammar, typified by "If I would a-knowned, I could a-rode, I would a-went, but if I had a-went, I couldn't a-et nothing no how."

2. Slang, typified by "If I'd a thumbed a ride, I'd a-hitch-hiked to the stunt, but I couldn't a-stored away the grub."

3. Ordinary English, typified by "If I'd known I could ride, I'd have gone, but I couldn't have eaten anything anyhow."

4. Formal English, typified by "Had I known I could ride, I should have gone. If I had gone, however, I could not have eaten anything."18

Miss Strong suggests letting pupils try their hands at putting expressions through these different levels. After a discussion of the type of life situation each level exemplifies, she would let them decide for themselves which one they want to accept. Most of them will realize the importance of being able to fit into their social environment. They will under-


stand, for instance, that when they do written work for school at least an ordinary English level should be reached, if they are going on to college a knowledge of formal grammar is necessary, and that a sprinkling of alang is fine but a steady diet clogs the communicative system. The very fact that these levels are left open to their choice should stimulate some pupils not otherwise easily reached with a desire to raise their level.

In Chapter Two certain principles of interest were listed. Throughout the present chapter mention has been made of pupils' attitude toward correct usage. By way of summary let us see which principles of interest are involved.

The first principle states that an activity which leads toward a worthy and definite goal proves to be most interesting to the individual. If Miss Strong's suggestion of allowing a pupil to choose his own level of usage is followed, the pupil is provided with a goal when he makes his choice.

Another principle is that more interest seems to arise from problem-solving situations than from ones involving formal drill and memorization. The fact that language is changing makes using it a problem-solving matter. Pupils who are aware of this fact realize that even they have a part in language building and, instead of always being forced to memorize what is correct, they may be led to watch language changes themselves. Especially will they need to know about and have handy in class such studies as Leonard's and that of Marckwardt and Walcott in order to
check acceptable usage. Another source of information is that found in educational magazines, such as the "Current English Forum" in the English Journal. Pupils can even be encouraged to write letters themselves to such departments asking about disputable expressions which have come to their attention. The very fact that they are finding out for themselves instead of depending upon the teacher's word holds their interest.

Social approval was mentioned as a means by which interest is stimulated. Such an approach to the usage problem as has been discussed sets up the approval of the group in which the pupil finds himself as the determining factor in the choice of his expression. "The average boy has no desire to appear an outlander, to be considered 'queer' and different. He wishes heartily (perhaps, we sometimes think, too heartily) to conform and to have a reputable standing in public opinion."¹⁹

When he is considering the matter of correcting pupils' errors, a teacher should realize that there are other things which come first. One is to get the pupil to use language in his group and to do it interestingly and with poise. If the teacher in his zeal to correct errors makes the pupils feel he is incapable and that the task is beyond his powers, his interest is lost. Two principles of interest are involved; first, interest is stimulated by an activity which is at the pupil's level of intelligence.

¹⁹Seely, op. cit., p. 20.
and, second, it is increased if he has had some successful experience in the activity. Individual differences need to be considered in this matter. Glen, a timid boy, whose school attendance is irregular, whose home background is unsettled, and whose participation in class has been poor, probably should not be corrected after his first attempt in a class activity even though his talk on his stay in Florida is filled with errors. Just standing before the class and talking has been hard enough for him. Why should his feeling of success be broken by a long enumeration of errors, which he will not remember anyway? Perhaps the time will come later when some of his errors may be corrected, but what he needs most at the time, a sense of accomplishment, should not be taken from him. On the other hand there is Nancy, a girl who has already achieved a degree of poise before a group, who works hard for she knows she is going to college, and who is capable and skilled. She expects corrections. A teacher who fails to make them is cheating her. Her level of achievement and successful experience is much higher than Glen's; therefore, in order for a study of grammar to be interesting to her it must not be too easy; it must be something that leads her on.

A teacher's personality, one of the other factors of interest, even enters into a consideration of usage teaching. If the teacher is going to accept the fact that language is growing, that certain doubtful expressions may be used, and that a problem-solving approach toward deciding
the acceptance of an expression is possible, he is making of himself a friend and fellow sharer in an activity rather than a dictator of what must be done.

A sound approach to the problem of selecting a standard of usage, then, must be cognizant of the change language makes, of the relation of grammar to language, and of the levels of usage found in society. A result of such an approach is an increased interest on the part of the pupil in the study of grammar.
CHAPTER IV

TEACHING THE PRINCIPLES OF FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

Functional grammar has been defined in Chapter One as a series of statements that will enable a pupil to know when he is speaking and writing correctly. It will either help prevent an error or correct one already made. Such a concept of grammar will label a large portion of what has been taught as unnecessary.

Just which principles of grammar then are to be considered practical and which are to be regarded as having no functional value? A logical place to look for an answer would be among the mistakes pupils have been found to make. Several studies of pupils' errors have been carried on in the past.

The first important one was by Dr. W. W. Charters and Edith Miller,¹ who investigated and classified the errors made by elementary-school children of Kansas City. The purpose was threefold: to discover the errors made, to find what rules of grammar were necessary to understand these items, and to learn what items should be included and what items should be taken from the course of study already used in their city. Martin J. Stormzand and M. V. O'Shea, combining this investigation with other lists of errors and dividing the number of errors by the frequency of use, arrived at what they called "error quotients," or

the number of times an error can be expected to occur in pupils' papers in a given number of chances. The following list of items, arranged in order of importance, is taken from one of their tables.\(^2\) The figures indicate the number of errors that may be expected in school compositions in 1,000 chances.

1. Comma setting off dependent clause out of its natural order omitted...650
2. Name of city and state written without punctuation..................600
3. Independent clauses of compound sentences not separated..........578
4. Hyphen omitted in compound word........507
5. Non-restrictive clause not set off.......495
6. Members of series not separated..........492
7. No punctuation after introductory expression..........................458
8. Comma before, after, or in broken quotation.............................447
9. Use of objective for possessive with gerund..............................444
10. Wrong form of possessive nouns.........427
11. "You" used indefinitely..................390
12. Failure to capitalize proper nouns and adjectives......................316
13. Failure to distinguish "it's" and "its".................................290
14. Interrogation mark omitted...............259
15. "Only" misplaced in sentence............237
16. "O'clock" written without apostrophe..................................231
17. Use of "most" for "almost"..................222
18. Miscellaneous misuses of apostrophe......................................211
19. No period after titles.......................193
20. No period after abbreviation..............147
21. Misuse of quotation marks................110
22. Wrong number of verb with expletive "there"..........................76
23. Wrong form in past participle.............42
24. No period (group total)...................30
25. Predicate nominative pronoun in wrong case..............................22
26. Misspelling of "there" or "their"........19

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 191.
As Stormzand and O'Shea point out, the practical value of their study lies "in having schools or teachers compute such tables for their own classes."³

A more recent study was made by Henry Harap, who analyzed thirty-three investigations of the errors of pupils written and oral English. The following summary of his discoveries was reported in the English Journal, June, 1930.

I. Verbs

1. Disagreement of verb with its subject in person, don't for doesn't. Disagreement of a verb with its subject in number.

2. Wrong number of a verb with expletive there. There remains three boys to see.

3. Agreement with a singular noun that has a plural ending. Athletics are.

4. When separated from subject by a phrase. Not one of our friends were there.

5. Singular verb with a compound subject joined by and. How is John and his brother?

6. After a pronoun whose antecedent is overlooked. She is one of those who is easily overlooked.

7. After neither. Neither of us deserve the prize.

8. Here are; was for were; is for are.

³Ibid., p. 192.
Wrong past tense

9. Seen for **saw**; 10. **come** for **came**; 11. **begun** for **began**;
12. **done** for **did**; 13. **give** for **gave**; 14. **run** for **ran**;
15. **laid** for **lay**; 16. **swum** for **swam**; 17. **drunk** for **drank**;
18. **would run** for **ran**; 19. **use** for **used**; 20. **sung** for **sang**;
21. **says** for **said**; 22. **dove** for **dived**; 23. **was** for **were**.

24. Failure to use the past perfect tense. I **found him** almost recovered though he was quite ill.

25. Failure to use present perfect tense. See me after you see **Mr. Smith**.


27. **Went** for **gone**; 28. **did** for **done**; 29. **saw** for **seen**;
30. **Froze** for **frozen**; 31. **came** for **some**; 32. **broke** for **broken**
33. **laid** for **lain**; 34. **swam** for **swum**; 35. **tore** for **torn**.

36. Use of double negative.
   **could not hardly** for **could hardly**; use of **didn't**
   **have no**; **ain't got no**; **didn't do nothing**; **hadn't**
   **no for hadn't**

Use of wrong verb

37. **Lay** for **lie**; 28. **leave** for **let**; 39. **lend** for **borrow**;

40. **Sat** for **sit**. 41. **set** for **sit**. 42. **learn** for **teach**;

43. **Can** for **may**.

II. Pronouns

45. Subject not in nominative case. **John and me are going**
    **to camp this summer**.

46. Predicate nominative not in nominative case. **It is**
    **him. It is me.**

47. The use of wrong cases of pronouns after **than, as** and
    **as well as. He is taller than me. This misfortune**
    **falls more heavily upon you than I.**

*Usage permits either "It is I" or "It is me." "It is me"
    is almost universal, at least in the Middle West, except
    among teachers on parade.
48. Object of preposition not in objective case. *Mother gave the ball to John and I.*

49. Object of verb not in objective case. *Mother sent John and I.*

50. *Whom* for *who; who* for *whom.*

51. Wrong formation of compound pronouns. *They hurt themselves.*

52. Use of objective for possessive with gerund. *I’m tired of him complaining.*

53. Disagreement of pronoun with its antecedent. *Will everyone bring their paper?*

54. Confusion of *its* and *it’s.* *It’s hard to tell.* *The dog hurt it’s paw.*

55. Use of *which* for *who* and vice versa. *He is the man which I meant. This is a dog who knows his tricks.*

56. Lack of clear reference of pronoun to antecedent. *Mary told her friend that she was mistaken.*

III. Adjectives and Adverbs

57. Incorrect comparison of adjectives.

58. Use of adjective for adverb when modifying an adjective. *Awful* for *very; real* for *very.*

59. Use of adjective for adverb when modifying a verb. *He is most done. Everyone will be treated fair.* This error involves many other specific cases including the misuse of *good, easy, careless, fine, safe, different, neat, bad.*

60. Use of adverb for adjective after a copulative verb. *He feels badly.*

61. Only misplaced in the sentence. *He only helped the boys.*

62. Use of *those* and *these* for *that* and *this.* *I like those kind of grapes.*

63. Use of expression *that there* and *this here.* *That there man is my neighbor.*

64. Use of *them* for *these* and *those.*
IV. Prepositions and Conjunctions

Use of superfluous prepositions.

65. In back of for back of or behind; off of for off; add up for add; end up for end; where are you at; return back; start in for start.

Use of wrong prepositions.

66. Off me for from me; by my aunt for to my aunt; to home for at home; different to for different from; in for into; between for among.

Use of wrong conjunction.

67. Use of like for as or as if.

68. Where and how used wrongly as a conjunction. Did you read where the boy was saved from drowning in the creek? Did you read how a man was killed?

V. Nouns

Wrong number in nouns.

69. Nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant.

70. Nouns ending in o preceded by a consonant.

71. Nouns ending in is (basis).

72. Plural of proper nouns.

73. Nouns which change their form in forming the plural (phenomenon).

74. Nouns which have no plural (athletics).

75. Nouns which have no singular (scissors).

76. Compound nouns (brother-in-law).

Wrong form of possessive case in nouns.

77. After plural nouns ending in s. Teachers' dining room.

78. Compound nouns (court-martial).

VI. Sentence Structure

79. Omission of subject. Received your letter.

80. Omission of predicate.
81. Dangling participle. The boy gazed at his father, trembling in anger.

82. Misplaced modifier. She claimed she had paid her admission several times (meaning one admission).

83. Wrong handling of parallel structure. He taught piano, violin, and vocal (should be voice).

84. Double subject. John, he went. Why there was.

VII. Punctuation

85. No period at end of sentence.

86. No period after abbreviations.

87. No question mark at end of sentence.

88. Failure to set off a non-restrictive clause by commas.

89. Failure to set off series by commas.

90. Failure to set off parenthetical element by commas.

91. Failure to set off an appositive by commas.

92. Failure to set off a quotation by a comma.

93. Failure to use quotation marks.

94. Failure to use a semicolon when there is no conjunction between clauses of a compound sentence.

95. Failure to use a semicolon to set off a series.

96. Failure to use parentheses.

97. Failure to use a colon.

98. Failure to use an exclamation point.

99. Apostrophe not properly used to show a contraction.

VIII. Capitalization

100. Failure to capitalize proper nouns.

101. Failure to capitalize title of a book; articles; newspaper; chapter headings.

102. Failure to capitalize the first word of a direct quotation.
103. Wrong use of a capital for title of a person when it is used as a common noun.

104. Wrong use of capitals for the names of school subjects other than languages.

Another recent investigation, made in 1942 by Alice E. McKeehan and Carl G. F. Franzen, is interesting because of the material investigated. Twenty modern plays were selected and the author of each asked to give the educational level he would assign each character. The results, though to a certain extent unreliable since the source material is not what someone actually used but authors’ opinions of what characters in their plays would say in real life, show close resemblance to those records based on observation. The twenty most frequent errors were found to be:

- Ain't
- Ellipsis of auxiliary
- Ellipsis of pronoun
- Ellipsis of verb
- "Will" for "shall"
- "Get" for "have"
- Ellipsis of conjunction in noun clause
- "Have got" for "have"
- Double negative
- Present for past tense
- "Would" for "should"
- "Don't" for "doesn't"
- "Sure" for "surely"
- "Them" for "those"
- "He work" for "he works"
- Perfect participle for past tense
- Ellipsis for relative pronoun
- "He are" for "he is"
- "Sort of" for "rather"
- "A-ing" for "a-ed"

McKeehan and Franzen also concluded that:

1. Verb "errors" constitute about 60 per cent of all errors made.
2. "Errors" in the use of nouns are negligible
3. About 20 per cent of total "errors" made are pronoun "errors," most of them being in personal pronouns.

4. The use of an adjective for an adverb is the most common adjective usage "error."

The first item above compares almost exactly with the Charters-Miller investigation which reported 57 per cent of the total errors were verb errors.

Harry N. Rivlin\(^5\) submitted a list of items of grammar to four experts, Professors A. Abbott, W. W. Charters, R. E. Inglis, and S. A. Leonard, in order to get a consensus of opinion regarding the most important and the least important items of grammar. These items he arranged in table form according to the rating they were given by the judges.

On the basis of the findings of Rivlin, of Charters and Miller, and of Stormzand and O'Shea, Wilfred Eberhart\(^6\) prepared a list of items of grammar that are of functional value and a second list of items that are non-functional in improving the pupils' speech and writing and which, therefore, should be eliminated from the curriculum. The items of grammar together with their functions follow:

**Items of Grammar of Functional Value**

I. Parts of Speech
   A. Noun
      1. Concept of noun
         Function of nouns in direct address and nouns in apposition when used parenthetically
      2. Proper noun
         a. Capitalization of proper nouns
         b. Capitalization of adjectives derived from proper nouns

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3. Collective noun
   a. Agreement of verb with collective noun as subject
   b. Agreement of pronoun with collective noun as antecedent
4. Nouns in apposition
   a. Use of commas
   b. Agreement of noun in apposition with pronoun in possessive case
5. Gender of noun
   a. Agreement in gender of pronoun and noun
   b. Formation of the feminine forms of the most common nouns
      (From a grammatical standpoint the gender of nouns is of slight importanc because of the infrequency of errors.)
6. Number of noun
   a. Formation of regular plurals
   b. Formation of the most common irregular plurals
   c. Agreement of pronoun with antecedent noun
   d. Agreement of verb with noun as subject
7. Concept of case of noun
   (The functional value of the concept of the case of noun is limited to the possessive case.)
8. Possessive case
   a. Formation of possessive case—use of apostrophe
   b. Uses of possessive case
      (1). To show relation or connection
      (2). To show ownership
      (3). With gerund
      (4). In apposition

B. Pronoun
1. Concept of pronoun
   a. Agreement of pronoun with antecedent in person, number, and gender
   b. Capitalization of pronouns referring to God
   c. Capitalization of "I"
2. Relative pronoun
   a. Correct use of "who," "which," "what," and "that"
   b. Agreement of verb in person and number
   c. Correct use of case forms
      Nominative: subject, predicate attribute
      Objective: object of verb, verbal, or preposition
      Possessive: relation, ownership, with gerund
3. Personal pronoun  
(There is no functional value in the study of the classification "personal pronoun.")  
   a. Agreement of pronoun with antecedent in person, number, and gender  
   b. Agreement of verb with pronoun subject  
   c. Difference between "its" and "it's"  
4. Intensive pronoun and reflexive pronoun  
(There is no functional value in the study of the classifications "intensive pronoun" and "reflexive pronoun." Instruction should be given, however, in the avoidance of such errors as "John and my self were there" and the use of such erroneous forms as "h is self" and "their selves." )  
5. Inflection of pronouns  
   Use of forms for nominative case, objective case, possessive case, singular, plural, masculine, feminine, and neuter of most common pronouns.  
6. Antecedent  
   Agreement of pronoun with antecedent  
   Correction and prevention of use of pronoun with an indefinite antecedent  
7. Number of pronoun  
   a. Agreement with antecedent  
   b. Agreement of verb with pronoun subject  
8. Person of pronouns (for personal and relative pronouns only)  
   a. Agreement of pronoun with antecedent  
   b. Agreement of verb with subject pronoun  
   c. Proper order of pronouns when several "persons" are used  
      (The person of pronouns should receive only slight attention because of the infrequency of error.)  
9. Case of common pronouns (personal pronouns and "who")  
   a. Correct use of each case  
   b. Correct use of forms for each case  
   c. Nominative case  
      Subject and predicate attribute  
   d. Possessive case  
      Proper spelling of possessive forms  
      Use with gerund
10. Predicate pronoun
(There is no functional value to the study of this classification as indicated in B, 10c.)

C. Adjective
1. Concept of adjective
   Use of adjective only to modify noun or pronoun
2. Classification of adjectives
   Proper adjective
   Capitalization
3. Comparison of adjectives
   a. Proper use of each degree
   b. Comparison of most common adjectives
   c. Elimination of double comparatives
4. Predicate adjective
   Use with copulative verbs
5. Number of adjectives
   (There is no functional value in the study of the number of adjectives except for "this," "that," "these," and "those.")
6. Distinction between adjective and adverb
   Correction and prevention of errors of the type of "the car runs good" and "the music sounds sweetly."

D. Verb
1. Concept of verb
   (See subdivisions below.)
   Presence of a verb in every complete sentence
2. Predicate verb
   a. Presence of a predicate verb in every sentence
   b. Agreement of predicate verb with subject
3. Subject of verb
   a. Subject expressed or definitely understood in every sentence
   b. Agreement of verb with subject
4. Object of verb
   a. Employment of object form of pronouns
5. Principal parts
   a. Difference between past participle and past tense
   b. Correct use of principal parts of most common irregular verbs
6. Auxiliary verb
   a. Agreement with subject ("to have" and "to be")
   b. Need for an auxiliary verb with the past participle
7. Number of verb
   Agreement of verb with subject
9. Person of verb
   Agreement of verb with subject
   (The functional value of this item is slight because of the relative infrequency of errors in person.)
9. Copulative verb
   a. Case of predicate pronoun
   b. Use of adjective, not adverb
10. Regular verb
    Formation of tenses
11. Irregular verbs
    Formation of tense forms of most common irregular verbs
12. Infinitive
    Case of pronoun subject of infinitive
13. Participle
    Avoidance of dangling participles
14. Gerund
    Case of noun or pronoun used with gerund
15. Tense
    Proper formation and use of various tense forms of troublesome irregular verbs

E. Adverb
1. Concept of adverb
   a. Difference in use between adjective and adverb
   b. Formation of adverbs from adjectives
   c. Position of adverbial modifiers
   d. Use of commas to set off adverbial modifiers at beginning of sentence
2. Comparison of adverbs
   a. Proper use of each degree
   b. Usual way of comparing adverbs
   c. Proper use of most common irregular adverbs

F. Preposition
1. Correct usage of most common prepositions
2. Case of pronoun used as object of preposition

G. Conjunction
   (Conjunctions offer little grammatical difficulty. Since discrimination in their use is important in showing thought relationship, they should be taught in connection with sentence structure and punctuation.)
1. Proper position of correlative conjunctions
2. Proper placement of punctuation marks in relation to conjunctions
3. Avoidance of "and" and "so then" habits
4. Proper use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions

H. Interjection
   Proper use of exclamation mark

II. Sentence
   A. Concept of sentence
      1. Need for subject and predicate in every sentence
      2. Avoidance of fragmentary sentences
      3. Agreement of verb with subject
      4. Capitalization of first word in sentence
      5. Use of period at end of sentence, except when a question has been asked or strong feeling expressed. (Note the omission of the terms "declarative," "imperative," "interrogative," and "exclamatory.")
   B. Classification as "simple," "compound," and "complex"
      1. Punctuation of compound and complex sentences
      2. Avoidance of loose sentence structure caused by merely stringing sentences together as a compound sentence.
   C. Normal and transposed word orders
      Correct use of commas when modifiers are out of normal word order
   D. Compound subject
      1. Agreement of verb with compound subject
      2. Effect of "and" and "or" on the number of the subject

III. Phrase
   A. Concept of phrase
      1. Correct use of prepositions
      2. Correct use of prepositional phrase of objective case of pronoun
      3. Position of phrase near word modified
      4. Avoidance of using phrase as a complete sentence

IV. Clause
   A. Concept of clause
      1. Prevention of incorrect use of clauses as a sentence
      2. Avoidance of loose sentences caused by stringing clauses along with "and" and "so"
   B. Principal (independent) clause
      Punctuation of compound and complex sentences
   C. Subordinate (dependent) clause
      Punctuation of complex sentences
   D. Restrictive and non-restrictive clauses
      Punctuation of non-restrictive clause

V. Expletive
   Agreement of verb with subject where expletive is used
VI. Concept of modifier
   Position of modifier near word modified

VII. Discourse, direct and indirect
   A. Punctuation of direct discourse
   B. Paragraphing of conversation
   C. Absence of quotation marks in indirect discourse

VIII. Contractions
   Use of the apostrophe in the spelling of contrac-
       tions

Elements of Grammar of No Functional Value

(The items listed under each heading are to be elimi-
   nated not the general category indicated by the head-
   ing itself.)

I. Parts of Speech
   A. Noun
      1. Noun as substantive
      2. Common noun
      3. Abstract noun
      4. Material noun
      5. Noun used as adjective
      6. Person of noun
      7. Predicate noun
      8. Nominative case
         a. Subject
         b. Predicate attribute
         c. Noun in apposition
         d. Nominative of address
         e. Nominative of exclamation
         f. Absolute with participle
      9. Objective case
         a. Direct object
         b. Object of preposition
         c. In apposition
         d. Indirect object
         e. Adjunct
         f. Adverbial objective
         g. Predicate accusative
         h. Retained object with passive voice
         i. Subject of infinitive
         j. Secondary object
   10. Dative case
   11. Parsing nouns
      (No functional value of parsing nouns is
         evident except where an abbreviated form
         is used to point out the reason for the
         correction of a specific error.)

B. Pronoun
   1. Classification of pronouns
      (There is no functional value in the
      study of the following classifications.
Pertinent principles may be taught, however, without engaging in a study of nomenclature.)

a. Personal pronoun
b. Demonstrative pronoun
c. Intensive pronoun
d. Reflexive pronoun
e. Compound personal pronoun
f. Reciprocal pronoun
g. Identifying pronoun
h. Indefinite pronoun

2. Case of common pronouns
a. Nominative of direct address
b. Nominative by exclamation
c. Adverbial objective
d. Adjunct accusative
e. Objective appositive
f. Retained object with passive voice
g. Predicate accusative
h. Secondary object
   These constructions may be omitted because of their relative infrequency.

3. Gender of pronouns

4. Pronoun as substantive
   There is no functional value in the special study of the pronoun used as a substantive inasmuch as the functional applications are all treated under other topics.

5. Parsing pronouns
   There is no functional value in parsing pronouns except where an abbreviated form is used to point out the reason for the correction of a specific error.

6. Syntax of pronouns
   There is no functional value in parsing pronouns except where an abbreviated form is used to point out the reason for the correction of a specific error.

C. Adjective
   1. Classification of adjectives
      a. Article
         There is no functional value in the study of the classification "article" although the following facts about "a" and "an" and "the" may be taught:
         Distinction between "a" and "an" and "the"
         Proper use of "a" and "an"
         Non capitalization in titles
      b. Pronominal adjective
      c. Interrogative adjective
         There is no functional value in the study of the term "interrogative
adjective" but the distinction between "which" and "what" may be taught.

d. Demonstrative adjective
There is no functional value in the study of the term "demonstrative adjective" but the following facts in regard to "this," "that," "these," and "those" may be taught: Correct use of singular and plural Avoidance of error of substituting "them" for "those" or "these" Avoidance of error of using such expressions as "this here"

e. Limiting adjective
f. Number adjective
There is no grammatical value in the study of the distinction between cardinal and ordinal numbers. However, the avoidance of such errors as "one of sixteenth books" and "3st Street" may be taught.

g. Descriptive or common adjective
h. Possessive adjective
i. Relative adjective
j. Indefinite adjective
k. Intensive adjective
l. Identifying adjective

2. Adjective phrase
3. Adjective clause

D. Verb
1. Complete verb
2. Active and passive voice
3. Mood
4. Verb phrase
5. Verbal
6. Transitive verb
7. Intransitive verb

E. Adverb
1. Classification of adverbs and adverbial modifiers
   a. Common
   b. Conjunctive
   c. Place
   d. Time
   e. Degree
   f. Manner
   g. Cause
2. Adverbial phrase
3. Adverbial clause

F. Conjunction
1. Simple
2. Compound
II. Sentence

A. Classification as "declarative," "imperative," "interrogative," and "exclamatory"
   There is no functional value in the study of the foregoing terms. Correct terminal punctuation may be taught without reference to them.

B. Analysis
   Sentence analysis has no functional value except where an abbreviated form is employed to point out the reason for the correction of a specific error.

C. Diagramming
   Diagramming has no functional value except where a simple, abbreviated form is employed to point out the reason for the correction of a specific error.

D. Complete subject
E. Complete predicate
F. Subject substantive
G. Predicate word or simple predicate
H. Compound predicate
I. Subject word
J. Predicating subject element
K. Predicating predicate
L. Complement
M. Adverbial objective
N. Retained object
O. Subject not expressed

III. Phrase

A. Prepositional phrase
B. Verb phrase
C. Participle phrase
D. Infinitive phrase
E. Noun Phrase
F. Adjective phrase
G. Adverbial Phrase

IV. Clause

Coordinate clauses

V. Affirmative and negative sentences

This classification is not of grammatical importance. Instruction may be offered, however, to eliminate the incorrect use of the double negative and to insure the use of commas after "yes" and "no."

The tables of Stormzand and O'Shea showing the rank of error groups according to frequency indicate that in written work mistakes in punctuation stand first in number.

of errors made. Since there seems to be a need for more study and teaching of punctuation, the writer has analyzed the punctuation rules commonly found in textbooks\(^8\) to discover the grammatical principles a knowledge of which is necessary in order to punctuate sentences correctly. To show which items should be stressed above others, the error quotient worked out by Stormzand and O'Shea is given.\(^9\) The figures indicate the number of errors that may be expected in school compositions in 1,000 chances. As another help in determining which rules seem to need stressing, the errors in punctuation listed in Harap's study are also indicated by the letter "H." Those items not containing a number or a letter were not in either list and therefore can be regarded as not causing difficulty to pupils. The punctuation rules analyzed are divided into two groups, the group requiring a knowledge of grammatical principles for use, and the group requiring no knowledge of such principles. After each rule in the first group are listed the grammatical concepts necessary for an understanding of it.

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\(^8\)The texts used were:

Mary Hutchinson, *Mastery Units in English Grammar, Ninth Year*.

Ellen Smith and Leona McAnulty, *Essentials in English, Laboratory Method*.

J. C. Tressler, *English in Action, Course Four*.


Punctuation Rules That Require Grammatical Concepts

1. Period

The period is used after sentences, except when a question is being asked or strong feeling expressed.

19 — H

Concept of a complete sentence.

Some texts still use the terms, "declarative," "imperative," "interrogative," and "exclamatory." The terms themselves are unnecessary to an understanding of which terminal punctuation mark to use.

2. Comma

A. As a rule, appositives are set off by commas. Restrictive appositives are not set off.

Errors in the use of commas with appositives were included in Stormzand and O'Shea's list but a quotient could not be determined.

H

Concept of nouns in apposition, including their modifiers. Meaning of "restrictive."

B. Use a comma to separate a noun of direct address from the rest of the sentence.

Concept of a noun. The term "direct address" is not necessary for the meaning can be explained more simply.

C. Words, phrases, or clauses in series are separated by commas.

492 — H

Concept of phrase and clause.

D. As a rule, the comma is used between the principal parts of a compound sentence if they are joined by a conjunction.

578 (This quotient includes the failure to use a semicolon in a compound sentence when a comma is not division enough.)

Concept of a compound sentence and of a conjunction.
E. The comma occasionally takes the place of an omitted verb.

Conception of verb, although in classes easily confused by so many principles the expression "omitted word" could be used.

F. Use a comma to set off a dependent clause which precedes the independent clause.

65

Concepts of a dependent clause and of an independent clause.

G. Use the comma to set off non-restrictive phrases and clauses.

495 — H

Concepts of non-restrictive phrases and clauses.

H. The comma is used to set off a short direct quotation.

447 — H

Concept of a direct quotation.

I. Most parenthetical expressions are set off by commas.

The quotient was not determined for this item although it was listed

H

Concept of a parenthetical word, phrase, or clause.

J. A long phrase preceding the main clause is usually set off by a comma. Words, such as, "well," "yes," and "no," may be included with this rule.

458

Concept of a phrase.

3. Superfluous commas

The quotient could not be determined by Stormzand and O'Shea, although it was included in their list.

This error is listed in Harbrace Handbook of English
as the fifth most common error in the average student theme.

A. Do not use a comma to separate the subject and its verb, the verb and its complement, or an adjective and its noun.

Concepts of subject, verb, complement, adjective, and noun.

B. Do not use a comma to separate two words or two phrases joined by a co-ordinating conjunction.

Concepts of phrase and co-ordinating conjunction.

C. Do not use commas to set off words or short phrases (especially introductory ones) that are not parenthetical or that are very slightly so.

Concept of parenthetical phrases.

D. Do not use commas to set off restrictive clauses, restrictive phrases, or restrictive appositives.

Concepts of clause, phrase, appositive, and the word "restrictive."

E. Do not put a comma before the first item of a series, after the last item of a series, or after a co-ordinating conjunction.

Concepts of what can be put in a series and of a co-ordinating conjunction.

4. Semicolon

As a rule, the semicolon is used between the clauses of a compound sentence if they are not joined by a conjunction. When the clauses of a compound sentence have commas within themselves a semicolon is used even when they are joined by a conjunction.

H

Concepts of a compound sentence and of a conjunction

5. Question mark

A question mark is used after a direct question, but not after an indirect question

259 — H

Concept of a question, both direct and indirect.
7. Apostrophe

A. Use an apostrophe to denote the possessive case of nouns and indefinite pronouns.

Concepts of possessive case, of singular and plural, and of the formation of the plural, regular and irregular.

The term "indefinite pronoun" need not be learned.

The error comes in using an apostrophe with personal pronouns. Even in the case of the personal pronouns the term need not be learned; only the few pronouns that are personal possessives need be studied.

B. An apostrophe is used to form the plural of letters, words, and signs.

Concept of plural.

C. An apostrophe is used in a contraction.

H

Concept of a contraction

8. Quotation marks

Quotation marks are used to enclose a direct quotation, but not to enclose an indirect quotation.

H

Concept of direct and indirect quotations.

9. Hyphen

Hyphenate a compound adjectival phrase formed of two or more words preceding a noun.

Concept of a compound adjectival phrase and of a noun.

Punctuation Rules That Do Not Require Grammatical Concepts

1. Period

The period is used after abbreviations.

147 — H
2. Comma

A. In an address or date each item after the first is set off by commas.

   600 (Name of city and state written without punctuation)

B. The comma is used to set off a contrasting expression introduced by not.

C. The comma is used after the salutation of a friendly letter and the complimentary close of any letter.

D. Occasionally, when no other rule justifies the use of a punctuation mark, a comma is necessary to prevent misreading.

   This item was included in Stormzand and O'Shea's list though no quotient was determined.

3. Semicolon

   Namely, for instance, for example, that is, and as, when introducing explanations, are preceded by the semicolon or the dash and followed by the comma.

4. Colon

   A. Use the colon after the salutation of a business letter.

   B. The colon is used to introduce a list of items or long or formal quotation or statement.

   C. Use the colon between hours and minutes when expressed in figures.

5. Exclamation point

   The exclamation point is used to mark an expression of strong or sudden emotion.

6. Dash

   The dash is used before a word that sums up preceding particulars.
7. Parentheses

Parentheses are used to enclose a side remark that does not affect the structure of the sentence.

8. Brackets

Brackets surround words inserted in an article or speech by a reporter or editor.

9. Hyphen

Use a hyphen in writing fractions, in all numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine when they are spelled out, and at the end of a syllable when it is necessary to divide a word at the end of a line.

Consulting error lists and working out tables of grammatical principles necessary to correct usage eliminates much unnecessary work with grammar that has heretofore been done. The question however still remains: What grammar should be taught to a particular class? Obviously to start at the beginning of such lists of principles as have just been outlined and to work one’s way through would be foolish. Just because parts of speech may come first on a list, no assumption should be made that a study of nouns, for instance, is what pupils in a given class need at a particular time in order to improve their accuracy and effectiveness of expression. How then can a teacher discover what his pupils do need? Seely lists three ways: (a) the speech and writing of pupils in the English classes; (b) the reports made to English teachers by instructors in other subjects; (c) the results obtained from diagnostic tests. ¹⁰

¹⁰Seely, On Teaching English, p. 65.

The present study does not purport to present any
suggestions about getting boys and girls to express themselves in class. Writing and speaking, however, are the starting points and reasons for grammar study and therefore should come first. Creativeness comes when pupils have an opportunity to express themselves on topics vital to them. "The language arts should include more than training the pupil in the mechanics of expression. They should provide for the development of the whole child, the enrichment of his experience, the awakening of his soul, extending his appreciations, and arousing his creative self."11 Once the stage has been set and the pupils are engaged in creatively expressing themselves, the teacher may make the next step and observe wherein help is needed to bring about improvement. Some sort of record must be kept. Perhaps it is just a card or paper for each individual pupil on which the errors he makes in oral work and on papers are jotted down. Perhaps the teacher will find a more detailed record is more convenient and helpful. It may take the form of a table with those errors common to most pupils written across the top as headings of columns and with pupils' names down the side. As errors are found, it is a simple matter to place a check after the pupil's name in the appropriate column.

After a few records have been made the next step is to analyze the entire group to discover which errors are group errors and thus merit time for a class unit in overcoming them. Individual errors made by only one or two

pupils should be cared for separately while the rest of
the class is working on another project.

The tabulation of errors made in English class
should be made more complete by using the two other
sources for discovering pupils' errors that were sug-
gested; namely, other teachers' reports and diagnostic
tests. Most teachers of other departments will realize
the importance and benefit to the progress of their own
classes if their pupils' expression is improved. Of course,
time is an important factor to a busy teacher; therefore,
any reports should be as simple as possible. Papers written
in other classes may be handed to the English teacher,
who will tabulate the errors found on them. Checking
sheets such as the one described above may be passed to
other teachers by the English teacher with the request
that a record be kept. In schools where faculty members
enjoy a happy and cooperative relationship with one another
some system whereby the errors of pupils are brought to
light can be worked out. By doing so, teachers are
helping pupils in two ways: first, by providing a basis
for their grammar study, and second, by making good usage
something that is respected in other places besides the
English classroom.

There are many diagnostic tests of usage from which
a choice may be made. Eberhart lists the following as some
of the leading ones:

Charters, W. W.: Diagnostic Language Test: (Public


Clapp, F. L.: Correct English (Department of Education, University of Wisconsin, 1921-1922).


Franseen, C. E.: Diagnostic Tests in Language for Three through Eight: (College of Education, University of Cincinnati, 1924).


Kirby, T. J.: Grammar Tests for Grades Seven through Twelve: (College of Education, University of Iowa, 1920).


Seely, H. E. and Boyer, E.: Diagnostic Test in Grammar: (Department of Education, Ohio State University, 1934).


While such tests have considered fads by some and have been overused by others, there can be no doubt of their

value if their results are properly studied. They may provide the teacher with points overlooked in the other materials at hand. Besides showing where a pupil stands in language usage at a given time, they may be used to test how much he has learned.

After the teacher discovers that a class needs to study a particular grammatical principle, he must decide upon the procedure for teaching that principle. Seely lists five steps:

1. Profuse illustration of the principle
2. Discovery and statement of the principle
3. Testing (proving) the principle by means of further illustrations
4. Employing the principle in drill exercises
5. Testing the learning by using new material.\textsuperscript{13}

Certain features of this method make it outstanding. First, the whole lesson is presented on a problem-solving basis. Sentences illustrating the principle are placed on the board before the class assembles or soon after. By careful questioning the teacher leads the pupils to understand the principle and to make their own statement of it. Then the principle is tested with other illustrations and further strengthened in the minds of the pupils by drill exercises. Later, after the teacher is reasonably sure that the principle has been established, testing can take place. It may be revealed that still more practice is needed or even that the statement of the principle needs to be worked out again.

Provision for adequate practice is the second out-

\textsuperscript{13}Seely, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 66.
standing feature of this method for it leads to habit formation. Bagley says: "If habit...is nine-tenths of life, — as it certainly is, — the formation of habits should bear a somewhat corresponding ration to the total task of education." Bagley emphasizes the importance of drill and repetition in habit formation, but he also points out that the principle that is most frequently neglected is this: "Processes that are to be made habitual or automatic must first be focalized." The principle to be learned or habit to be formed must be separated from all other material and stressed separately. Other writers, teachers of English, stress the same point:

In all your teaching never forget to apply the principle of one thing at a time. Unless you put yourself in the place of your students — many of whom are poorly prepared, self-conscious, overwhelmed with the newness of high-school life — you will fail to realize how befuddled they are, how complicated to them is this subject of grammar. Present one principle at a time, being certain that it has "soaked in" before going on to something else. "Make haste slowly," and you will be repaid by the progress of your class.

Shreve expresses the same idea thus:

The process of habit substitution is always difficult requiring persistent effort over a considerable period of time. On the other hand, the procedure has been haphazard and very unevenly distributed so far as any one

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15 Ibid., p. 123.

16 Dorothy Dakin, Talks to Beginning Teachers of English, p. 41.
habit is concerned. Teachers have attempted to correct all mistakes as they occur instead of concentrating on a few.17

Seely's steps allow for the psychology of habit formation by requiring that one principle at a time be stressed and that practice time be provided until mastery is assured. Another important point he makes when speaking of drill is that "until the principle has been reasonably firmly established all sentences should demonstrate proper usage. To attempt to correct errors before this time will tend to confuse the pupil rather than to help him."18 The National Council of Teachers of English adds some important suggestions. One is that drill, whether it takes the form of dictation, filling blanks, error recognition, error correction, a game, oral practice, or a test, should be brief, frequent, and sharp.19 Nothing can be more dulling to pupils' interest than drill periods that are long and lifeless. Another suggestion is that:

Diagnostic, practice, and mastery tests which make goals visible, enable the pupil to measure his own progress, and make education a game in which a score is kept, help to arouse a desire to use correct English. A good slogan in corrective teaching is, "Every lesson a test, and every test a lesson."19

Nearly every writer when making a list of the steps to be followed in good-habit formation places first


18Seely, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

arousing a desire on the part of the pupil to improve. It seems that the approach to the study of grammar outlined in this chapter would be the best possible one to arouse an interest in self-improvement. By way of summary let us list the ways such an approach follows the principles of interest developed in Chapter Two.

First, the pupil is given a chance to see that the grammar he is studying is helping him improve his expression. His class work has meaning for him for he sees how it is advancing him toward his goal.

Second, the material presented to him at his point of need should be more nearly within his level of achievement than a list of grammatical principles which has not been stripped of non-functional items. Isolation of one principle at a time to be learned also keeps the class activity within the pupil's range of ability by not confusing him with too many new points.

Third, making sure that a principle is well learned before moving on to another appeals to the pupil's feeling of success. If he has accomplished one thing, he is more ready to go on to a new item than if he has not.

Fourth, the awareness on the part of the pupil that he is advancing has been taken care of by the testing program suggested.

Fifth, the drill work suggested provides chances for competition if the teacher wishes to take advantage of it to stimulate interest.
Sixth, a problem-solving situation is provided when learning a new principle.

Seventh, active participation on the part of the pupils is, likewise, provided for. The class does not sit back trying to absorb a rule the teacher repeats for them but is active in working out its own rule.

Eighth, the drill exercises may be, at least, started under the teacher's supervision and thus the task is begun at the time of motivation, not some time later.

Only two other of the ten principles of interest remain. They need not be omitted as not being applicable to this approach to grammar study. They are the importance of the personality traits of the teacher and of social approval in the creating and maintaining of interest. A sympathetic teacher, who finds pleasure in helping pupils, will want a method of teaching grammar that really helps them. He will show his approval of those who are progressing and by suggestions encourage approval among class members. In fact, in so far as the teacher has the organization and management of the class in his hands, he is the important factor in the interest that a class feels in its activities. If he can choose material that pupils understand they need and if he can present it in an easy manner, his success is assured.
CHAPTER V
SOME SPECIAL DEVICES APPEALING TO INTEREST

In the preceding chapters a program of grammar teaching has been outlined in accordance with certain principles of interest. The program has included the study of pupils' errors to determine what grammatical principles are needed, the presentation of a grammatical principle in a problem-solving manner, the employment of diagnostic tests to determine errors and to measure progress, the development of a concept of the growth of language and of the relation of grammar to language, and a consideration of levels of usage in an attempt to help pupils choose their own standard. In the present chapter are presented some other activities and projects that a teacher may use to increase pupils' interest in the study of grammar. Some of them will help the pupil set for his goal better English, some will appeal to his sense of competition, some will utilize social approval, and some will help make the pupil aware that he is advancing. They all will be means of providing active participation on the part of pupils in grammar study.

Some teachers object to the use of special devices and projects on the grounds that there is danger that the activity may become an end in itself and the purpose for which it is used may be entirely forgotten. In other words, pupils may become so busily engaged in making a scrapbook
illustrating parts of speech, let us say, that they do not learn what a noun or a verb is. This accusation is the one some have made against the recommendations contained in *An Experience Curriculum in English* published by the National Council. Roy I. Johnson meets the criticism effectively when he cautions against misinterpretations of an experience program:

The first caution against misinterpretation may be stated in the words of a teacher who said, "It is all very well to use timely projects to motivate class work and to stimulate the pupils to greater interest. But while the pupils are making a blackboard chart or preparing a radio program, what happens to their spelling? Their sentence sense? Their knowledge of the rules of grammar? There should be something more to class work than keeping pupils busy with interesting projects, no matter how much social experience they may derive from it." First of all, it must be pointed out emphatically that the new curriculum does not ignore drill in the fundamental processes. A course of study which utilizes the functional approach contains as much provision for sentence practice and word study as the more formal type of course. The significant difference lies in the fact that in the new curriculum, practice occurs at the point of need and not as an independent segment of work which has no immediate relation to use. Every activity, purposed, planned and executed, must finally be judged....The pupil may be permitted to lose himself in a consuming interest which is generated by his enthusiasm for a particular project, but the teacher must never lose sight of the outcomes which the project is designed to further.1

It is therefore the job of the teacher to judge the device that is being employed to see that the purpose for

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which it is used really is met. If a scrap book takes too much time in a particular class so that none is left for a needed lesson or drill, its value may be questioned. If having members of a class "ring the gong" on a mistake everytime one is heard disturbs the class so much that they cannot follow the trend of the lesson, the teacher is wise to discontinue using such a device. The dangers that may spring from contests and games were discussed when competition was set up as a principle of interest. Here again the teacher must judge whether the outcomes are helpful to the individual or detrimental to social aims.

The value of special devices to relieve the routine of the classroom by providing some variety of activity cannot be ignored. Carrying on classwork in the same way, day after day, however good the original procedure may be, can be deadening. The alert teacher will look for ways to provide a change once in a while. In fact, variety is so necessary for interest in a classroom that it might well have been included in our list of principles of interest.

The device should not be one so devoted to play that it is entirely divorced from the subject material of the course. It would not be in keeping with the interest principle of advancement of a pupil toward his goal if it were. Pupils do not want to play all the time. Hart found that they appreciate the teacher who has control
of the class and who helps them learn the subject. Devices whereby interest in grammar itself is aroused can be worked out. Such devices can utilize subject material to help pupils fix it more clearly in their minds, to help them see the purpose of it, or to give them the satisfaction of knowing they are improving.

The following devices were developed or collected from other sources with the foregoing statements in mind. One teacher will probably not want to use all of them, nor will one teacher find they all will appeal to a particular class. They are merely suggestions; a teacher must judge their value for his own situation.

1. **Error Box**

Whenever an error is heard, in class or outside, the pupil writes his own name at the top of a slip of paper, writes the name of the person who made the mistake, and then writes the incorrect sentence and drops it in the error box, kept somewhere in the classroom.

At intervals the box is opened and the slips are removed. The class is then divided into two teams. Errors are read. In alternating order, members are called upon to correct the errors and to justify the correction. If unable to do so, the student is "erred" down. If it is discovered that a pupil has sent in an "error" which is really correct, he must take his seat. The

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team winning is the one who has most members standing at the end of "the error bee."

If it seems advisable to keep all pupils participating instead of being "erred" down, scores can be kept for each team. A limitation of games of this kind is that quite often the poorer students who need the practice are put out of the game and only the better ones receive benefit from the activity.

2. Experts on Grammar

In one class whenever a new principle of grammar was learned, one member was made the expert for that rule. When a pupil in the class made an error involving the use of the rule, the expert would rise and correct it. The value of the device lies in the attitude it creates in pupils. A boy who finds grammar hard to learn feels a glow of satisfaction when he is the only one of his who is permitted to rise and cite a certain grammatical principle that has been violated. What does it matter if the teacher sometimes has to do some pretty broad hinting to get him to notice the error?³

3. The Grammatical Football Game

This device, though rather elaborate in detail, would have an appeal because of the game it imitates:

A gridiron is placed on the blackboard with a fifty-yard line in the center, lines pro-

ceeding in five-yard units to the goal line, and goal posts indicated. The ball starts in midfield. The class divides into two teams; each with a captain, a star pupil. The side with the ball has pupils answer questions or recite from the assigned portion of the book in turn. The team has four downs (trials) in which to make ten yards. A correct answer nets five yards, and an answer partly correct or showing only moderate error yields no gain. A genuine "bonehead" play results in a five yard loss. Gain or loss is indicated by a line zigzagging across the gridiron in the fashion used by sports writers in a graphic representation of a football game.

After four downs without gaining the necessary yardage the ball goes to the opposing team; if the yardage is made, first down is called, and the ball continues in play with the same team. When the goal is reached, six points are scored. After a touchdown the captain may designate a player to answer an unusually hard question in order to try for the point after touchdown.4

4. Tournaments

When the class is doing review work the teacher may liken work to a tournament. A team may be made up of about six pupils. To assure fair matching of ability, the team should be composed of an excellent pupil for leader and others good, fair and weak. During drill periods teacher and better pupils will work with those having difficulty. Tests when they are given should be viewed as matches not as examinations.5

5. Number Game

Each child is given a sheet of paper containing questions or sentences in which items for drill are

4Ibid., p. 258.
5Edward Harlan Webster and Dora V. Smith, Teaching English in Junior High School, p. 201.
emphasized. The class is numbered. Number 1 represents the head, who calls another number. The person who bears the number called must read his sentence correctly and call another number. That person in turn reads his sentence correctly, and so the game continues. Those who miss go to the foot and numbers change. Number 1 starts again by calling a number. The idea is to work toward the top displacing number 1.

6. Illustrating Grammatical Rules

One teacher has each student prepare a grammar notebook, illustrating it either with drawings of his own or with pictures cut from old magazines and mounted neatly:

A separate page is reserved for each essential definition or rule. An appropriate heading is written or printed at the top of each page. The illustration is drawn or mounted, a title added, with the significant word or words underlined in color. The definition or rule is written across the bottom of the page.

Page one, for example, may be headed Nouns. Attractively mounted on the page are four small pictures. The first is a portrait of a girl and is entitled Evelyn, the second is a picture of New York's skyline, entitled New York, the third shows a fireman rescuing someone from a burning building and is entitled Bravery, and the last is a picture of a chair, so labeled. Across the bottom of the page appears the definition: "These words are all nouns because a noun is the name of a person, place, quality or object."6

6Clark and Eaton, op. cit., p. 262.
7. **Student Textbooks**

If the preceding device seems to require too much of the pupils' time, just a simple workbook reported by another teacher may be effective:

I have found that by class discussion better rules can be composed than appear in texts. At least a pupil can understand his rule, and that's a large percentage of the proposition. Accordingly, when we get to our grammar review, we decide upon our own definitions and guides to follow, and the students make their own workbooks. The result is very gratifying: the students seem to enjoy the personal touch, and their work is enthusiastic and good.  

8. **Hang the Dependent Clause**

Another teacher used a graphic way to make clear the difference between "independent" and "dependent" clauses. He substituted for these terms, which pupils often find meaningless, something that will call forth pictures of a definite thing in the minds of the pupils. Thus the subordinate or dependent clause becomes "the chandelier," and the main clause "the ceiling." This illustrates pictorially that the subordinate clause must hang to or from the main clause. A discussion of "When I clap my hands," "Since he was tired," and "Unless you go" shows that they need something to "hang on to." But that, brief as they are, "Stand up," "He went to sleep," and "I won't go" need no helpers to be understood; they are

sentences, though not very illuminating ones. So we may have a ceiling without any chandeliers, in which case the room may be rather dark. But we cannot have chandeliers, if they have no ceiling to support them. ⁸

9. Pass the Button

The problem of when and how to correct errors bothers many teachers. One teacher found a natural means developed within her class without any plan on her part:

I was reading a story about the early Pilgrims. The story said the Pilgrims did not want to stay in Holland because their children were adopting Dutch ways—even in speech. Later on in the story was an account of a Pilgrim school in America where the master was trying to eliminate the Dutch words from the children's speech. Each morning he placed a little metal object on his desk. The first child who used a Dutch word was given this metal button. It was considered a disgrace to have it; so the child listened carefully to the speech of his schoolmates. The child who had the button by the end of the day was given a flogging. The children liked this story very much and several of them said, "Oh, I wish we could do something like that." One boy said, "But no one here speaks Dutch."

Then I said, "Well, we don't always use good English. Sometimes we make mistakes." They asked if I would give a button to the first one who made a mistake. I found a large, green coat button in my desk and we began the game as soon as I heard the first mistake. The children watched their own speech very carefully and the speech of others. No one resented receiving the button. Of course we omitted the flogging. The child just left the button on his desk over-night. This even carried

⁸Clark and Eaton, op. cit., pp. 262-3.
over into the homes. Soon whole families were playing "pass the button." One mother said, "I'm glad. I didn't realize how careless we were getting."9

10. Giving the Gong

In one school the gong is rung whenever anyone makes a grammatical error. If a gong isn't handy, the pupils simply whisper sadly or yell uproariously, "Ding, dong." The teacher reports: "It's fun, nobody gets offended."10

Of course, such a device needs to be used with care. The teacher must be sure no one is offended and that the class is not disturbed by such an interruption. Its use would be more valid in a class where pupils have asked for some way of checking their errors than in one where the teacher suggested it prior to any desire on the part of pupils to be correct.

11. Quiz Programs

Radio quiz programs can offer some useful activities if adopted to the classroom. Questions or sentences with blanks to be filled may be written on slips of paper with points, varying in value according to the difficulty, written on the backs. The papers are scattered with question side down over a desk. Each pupil in turn tries for the number of points he wants by drawing from the group. Or a group of questions may be arranged in

9National Council of Teachers of English, Conducting Experiences in English, p. 327.

order ending with the "64-point" question and each pupil keeps trying until he fails. The class may be divided into teams for the program. Questions or sentences may be prepared by the teacher though the device lends itself well to pupil organization and conducting.

12. **Grab-Bag Assignments**

One instructor reports his success with "grab-bag" assignments, a device which lends the game touch to routine study:

> On separate slips I type a set of projects for the next day — each slip explaining a different job. With many oh's and ah's, the papers are drawn from a grocery bag, one by each student in turn. Most of these assignments involve research work on the part of the pupil, and as such present a valuable supplement to the regular class work.11

13. **Punctuating the Unpunctuated**

For those classes having difficulty with punctuation the following device is useful:

A passage from a textbook is selected by each student, the approximate length of the passage to be determined by the teacher. The student copies his own selected passage, "unpunctuating" as he goes and eliminating capitals at the beginning of all sentences. Passages are exchanged, punctuated, reexchanged, and rated.

With a class notably poor in the mechanics of writing, cardboard slips, each of which bears one sentence to be correctly punctuated, or one grammar form to be correctly used, are prepared and distributed to the pupils as they arrive in the classroom. As many are given out as will put into action every bit of board space. By

the time the entire class is present, the sentences are on the board. Without delay they are read and corrected. There is advantage, particularly with younger pupils, in stressing exclusively one rule of punctuation, or one grammatical error, for several days in succession. When mastery is achieved, the next point may be taken up in the same fashion.\textsuperscript{12}

This device could be varied by having the sentences already on the board when the class arrives. Each pupil may help himself to a slip of paper provided for the exercise and begin correcting as soon as he is seated. A teacher may, if he wishes to continue the practice period, write other sentences to be corrected after the first group is checked. Being sure to ask how many were able to get all the sentences right helps maintain interest for it shows pupils that the teacher is interested in their progress. Even continuing to ask, "How many missed one?" and "How many missed two?" and so on down the line helps those who were not able to be perfect feel that they have accomplished something.

14. \textbf{Error File}

Clarke and Eaton discuss the error file as an effective device for (1) making the student definitely aware of the glaring errors he must eliminate from his composition, (2) holding him seriously responsible for working constantly at these faults, (3) giving him concrete evidence of progress, (4) proving to him by cold facts whether or not

\textsuperscript{12}Clarke and Eaton, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 241-2.
he has eliminated them.  

A file may take various forms although it should be simple. The teacher can place an error he finds on a pupil's paper or hears in his oral work on a card or a form may be prepared on which a list of possible errors is written and a check placed after the particular ones a pupil makes. At intervals the pupils must be given a chance to study their own records and to discuss them.

Closely connected with an error file is a self-correction chart which the student keeps himself. It may be a list of common errors for the student to check himself against whenever a paper is returned to him or when he is corrected in class.

15. Repetition

Prescott reports the success another teacher, Fred G. Walcott, has secured by simple repetition around the class of correct forms used wrongly — "I ought not to go," for instance. In five minutes of rapid drill several expressions can be considered. Walcott points out:

It is not advisable, of course, to restrict the drills to violated forms, although this usually appears most desirable at first. The method is equally effective in constructive vocabulary building, or in establishing language patterns whose use would increase the fluency and flexibility of the students' speech.

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Ibid., p. 172.
Some surprising results have been obtained from such drill. After five minutes' daily attention to some few selected forms over a period of several weeks, their appearance in oral speech becomes noticeable; but, more surprising still, these same forms begin to appear in written work.\footnote{Prescott, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 56-7.}

16. \textbf{You Keep the Score}

An effective drill exercise, especially liked by pupils.— for they need not write anything except their score — is one in which the teacher asks the question or reads the sentence that needs a correct word. No one answers until everyone has had a chance to "think" and to decide upon the correct answer. Then the answer is given either by the teacher or by a pupil and all those who thought correctly may mark a point down for themselves. Since scores are not recorded nothing is gained by keeping a false record of one's points.

17. \textbf{A Collection of Poorly-Written Postal Cards and Letters}

To show the importance of expressing one's self clearly and correctly in writing a collection of cards and letters that have actually been written and that are so poorly done that the meaning is obscure is useful. Nearly everyone has received such mail. If such a collection should be hard to build, contact with someone in business would prove helpful. Of course all names should be marked out and care taken that in no way should
recognition be possible and reflection cast on any member of the class.

18. List of Errors Sent Home

Pupils may be encouraged to keep a list of errors they commonly make and to take their list home to ask for help in eliminating their mistakes. To add formality and importance to such a list, a special form may be prepared containing common errors, their correct forms, and a check mark opposite the ones a particular pupil makes.

19. A Visual Aid

A new field has recently been developed for use by teachers in the audio-visual aids. Edward G. Bernard points out one way such an aid may be utilized by the teacher of grammar:

Your lantern slide projector has unique advantages in administering certain types of tests. A short grammar or punctuation test can be flashed onto the screen and then cut off instantly at the expiration of a time limit. A slide is more strongly legible than blackboard writing and can be prepared in less time than mimeograph sets of question papers....

Do you know how to make a typewritten slide? Simply take a piece of clear, colorless cellophane cut to lantern slide size and then enclose it in two slips of carbon paper, carbon in. Insert it in the typewriter, and leaving a suitable margin, type your material. Then remove the carbon paper and insert the cellophane slip between two glass cover slides. A single pair of glass covers, hinged at the bottom only, can be used for innumerable cellophane
messages.15
If a school has available a slide-film projector type-written copies of exercises and tests may be prepared and photographed for use. The novelty of this procedure would do much to increase interest for in many schools the use of projectors is just being developed and pupils like something new and different.

20. To Lighten the Load Series
The English Journal has recently published one or two items each month sent in by teachers who have found certain devices helpful in their classes. The following is an example:

In a college-entrance examination the applicant was required to write a theme describing the campus. His first sentence was: "Looking out of the window of the English classroom we see cows walking about eating the grass and here and there a professor." How could he most easily have avoided the unintentional humor?16

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Although the subject of teaching grammar has been debated for years, it seems to be a problem on which there is still disagreement. A review of the history of the controversy shows that teachers have shifted back and forth between the two extremes of grammar as a set body of principles, unrelated to usage and forming a separate subject in itself, and of no study of grammar at all. Now the pendulum in its swing is somewhere between these two positions.

Statements accusing schools of graduating pupils unable to use their language correctly and effectively have presented a challenge to English teachers. Textbooks reflect the indecision of educators concerning the problem of how much grammar to teach, for some of them present material that is not necessary for the improvement of writing and speech. Boys and girls themselves, confused by much unnecessary subject matter, have come to dislike grammar.

It is with this last phase that the present study has dealt; namely, how can English grammar be taught in order that pupils may be interested in it and find it an aid for the improvement of their expression?
Grammar has been defined as "a logical arrangement of the conventionally accepted principles of word functions, relations, and usage."¹ It should be taught from a functional viewpoint; that is, it should be introduced as it is needed to prevent an error or to correct one already made. It will have to be "divested of all needless statements concerning syntax and all those classifications of words, phrases, clauses and sentences that are of no practical use."² Grammar viewed in this way should be interesting to pupils.

What is "interest"? Psychologists have defined it as a feeling of excitement and pleasantness or of worth to the self that may accompany the performance of an activity. It is stimulated by many different factors.

If an activity provides a worthy and definite goal or is a means to a future goal an individual has set for himself, it has meaning for him and is, therefore, interesting. If the activity is at an individual's level of intelligence, it is more interesting to him than if it is above or below his ability. His interest is more intense when he has had previous experience in an activity, especially if he has been successful in it. Social approval and other forms of rewards discrimi-

¹Howard Francis Seely, On Teaching English, p. 18.

inately given increase an individual's desire to continue in a given work. An awareness that he is advancing has the same effect. Competition adds to his enjoyment of an activity. In school work, according to the testimonies of pupils themselves, the personality of the teacher is a determining factor. Problem-solving situations are more interesting than ones involving formal drill and memorization. Active participation of pupils and teachers working together cooperatively lifts the class above dull routine. And last, the beginning of a piece of work at the time of motivation rather than at a later time keeps the task from looming large and forbidding and helps pupils to fix in their minds important facts which otherwise may become vague or be entirely forgotten.

How can these principles of interest be adapted to the problem of improving pupils' use of their language?

Some applications are possible when language growth, the relation of grammar to language, and the levels of usage found in society are considered in the English class. A few moments' thought will help everyone realize that language, the development of words and of their use in exchanging thoughts, came first and was in existence long before grammatical rules about language were formed. Today language is still growing and changing and, therefore, rules about it cannot be formulated with finality; they must change with it. Too often English
teachers do not admit this fact and are prone to con-
demn expressions which, though once outside the pale, 
have achieved general acceptance. Some time should be 
spent acquainting pupils with the facts of language 
growth and with the possible sources of information 
about current usage which may be used in checking the 
status of disputable expressions. Thus the study of 
correct usage becomes a problem-solving matter. 

The principle of social approval also applies here, 
for each individual wishes to be accepted by his associates. 
The social group in which an individual finds himself and 
the purpose for which he is speaking or writing create 
different levels of usage. A consideration of such 
levels leaves to the individual the choice of the type 
of language he will use — a far more interesting 
approach than that of having forced upon one a set 
standard regardless of social group or purpose. 

What are the principles of functional grammar and 
how may they be taught? Since functional grammar is 
a group of statements about language that will help 
prevent an error or correct one already made, a teacher 
should turn to pupils' errors to determine which prin-
ciples of grammar are needed. To the errors which he 
oberves his pupils making in their oral and written 
work should be added the reports of errors other teachers 
in the school system bring to him and the results of
diagnostic tests given to the class. After the information from these three sources has been tabulated, the teacher can determine which errors are most frequent and serious and, therefore, which grammatical concepts need to be developed to overcome them.

The next necessary activity is to find a suitable method of presenting the needed principles to the class. Seely's five steps are (1) profuse illustration of the principle, (2) discovery and statement of the principle, (3) testing (proving) the principle by means of further illustrations, (4) employing the principle in drill exercises, (5) testing the learning by using new material.3

This method is outstanding because of the provision it makes for adequate practice, so important in habit formation. It is suitable also because it is in keeping with the principles of interest discussed in this thesis. The pupil can see that grammar study aimed at eliminating his errors is leading him toward a goal. The material presented is more likely to be at the pupil's level of ability than if no consideration is given to his errors and needs. Learning one principle well at a time gives the pupil a feeling of success. The testing program helps make the pupil aware of his progress. The drill work suggested allows chances for competition. A problem-solving situation is provided in which the class participates actively in the process of working out the grammatical principle needed.

3Seely, op. cit., p. 66.
Social approval both on the part of the teacher and on the part of the class is made possible as the pupil advances. The drill lessons suggested may be started under the teacher's direction at the time of motivation.

Besides the general procedure outlined above there are other special activities and devices that may stimulate interest by helping relieve the monotony that comes from always carrying on classwork in the same way. Some of them appeal to the pupils' sense of competition because they are games, some of them help make grammatical principles clearer for they are unique ways of explaining those principles, some of them help fix principles so they are not forgotten by suggesting ways in which pupils can record or illustrate grammatical rules, some appeal to the pupils' sense of adventure by introducing an element of chance, and some help increase a desire for improvement by introducing an ideal of better usage.

Thus, by being always aware of the importance of interest to the learning process and of the means of achieving interest, the teacher can lift the study of grammar from the realm of difficult tasks to be done on compulsion and then forgotten to the level of pleasant experience and usefulness. Pupils who study grammar at this level will be using their language correctly and effectively.
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