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AT

CHARLESTON

Chestine Gowdy

Teacher Ahead of Her Time

(1860 - 1953)

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Frances W. McColl, Editor

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Contents

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I. FOREWORD

In the summer of 1949 I enrolled in the English Department of the School of Education at New York University.

During a class in linguistics I heard the word semantics for the first time and was reminded of something I had learned as a student in Model School at Eastern Illinois Normal, later called Eastern Illinois State Teachers College. So when I returned home that fall I pulled down my well-worn copy of Chestine Gowdy's ENGLISH GRAMMAR first published in 1901, revised in 1909. Although the word semantics appeared nowhere in her textbook, the logical basis for semantics was there.

Encouraged by Gertrude Hendrix, who was teaching mathematics in the Training School EISTC (now known as Eastern Illinois University) I decided to make a study of my old English textbook, demonstrating by chapter and verse how far ahead of her time Chestine Gowdy was as a teacher of English grammar.

II. AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

In the spring of 1950, I resolved to find out as much as possible about Miss Gowdy. When I was directed to a Miss Myrtle Gentry who was connected in some way with BRAND PEONY FARMS in Faribault, Minnesota, I wrote to her. In answer, I received not only the following letter from Miss Gentry but also a letter from Miss Gowdy herself. And so the exchange of letters began (only a few of them are included in this review) and continued until four months before her death.

March 21, 1950
Saturday Afternoon

My Dear Miss Kelly:

Your letter came several days ago but I haven't had a chance to use a typewriter until today as my girls don't work on Saturday and this gives me an opportunity to use one of the machines. I have to use a typewriter by the hunt and peck method as I broke my arm a few years ago and my fingers are too stiff to write by hand.

Both Miss Gowdy and I were very much interested in your letter and each day Miss Gowdy writes a little to tell you how she happened to write the grammar. As soon as she finishes her part of the work I will type it for her and it may be something you can use. I, too, studied the Gowdy grammar under Miss Gowdy at Normal. I don't think I ever enjoyed a subject more than this one and while I was in Normal during the years 1907-1909 I made my home with Miss Gowdy and we became very fond of each other. After I graduated in 1909 I started the departmental work in Iola, Kansas, and was there as a teacher of grammar when their departmental work just started. I was there for two years when the superintendent under whom I worked in Iola, Kansas, asked me to come and help him start the Junior High Schools in Wichita, Kansas. I worked with him there teaching grammar for three years and then I came to Faribault to make my home with Miss Gowdy. I was principal of the High School here for three years. Mr. Brand an old acquaintance of Miss Gowdy and a

former pupil asked me to take charge of his office and I gave up teaching in 1918 and came to the nursery as office manager. In a short time I became a partner and I suppose I shall be here my remaining working days.

Miss Gowdy is frail but she has a very active mind. She will be 90 years old July 30th and her mind is as clear and as keen as it ever was. She had pneumonia a year ago and she has never regained her former strength and I have had to keep help at the house ever since. She doesn't come to her meals any more and she isn't able to get upstairs. She doesn't see many people as practically all of her friends here have died and the remaining ones of her age are too poorly also to get out. I think over Sunday she will have written as much as you may care to use and I will type it the first of the week and send you the material she has. If you wish to write and ask her questions I am sure she will be very glad to hear from you. She is perfectly willing for you to use any material you wish for your thesis. If you decide to revise her book she will be interested in hearing of your plan. I feel quite sure Miss Gowdy has some of her writing stored away in the attic. I have been spending my spare time on Sunday trying to find some of this material and so far have not succeeded. But in searching for her material I have cleared the attic of a lot of rubbish for which I am thankful...

You will hear from me again during the coming week and if you should like to ask any questions after you read what Miss Gowdy has written, do not hesitate to write to me.

Sincerely yours,
Myrtle Gentry

April 11, 1950

Dear Miss Kelly,

I was gratified to learn from your letter to Miss Gentry that you have found my presentation of the subject of grammar so worthwhile that you plan to make it the subject of your doctor's thesis.

As you suspected might be the case I had preserved no notes that might be helpful in your work. However, I have enjoyed preparing the enclosed pages to send to you. I am sure you will be grateful to my long-time friend and housemate, Miss Gentry, for having prepared the typewritten copy.

As you will understand my work in the studying and the teaching of grammar has been so interrelated with the events of my life that I have been unable to separate them. But you will know what will be of help to you, and the more personal details may interest you in me as a person.

I shall always be pleased to hear of the progress of your work, and shall

be glad to answer any questions you may wish to ask. Also, I shall be interested in your ideas of a revision of my grammar.

Yours cordially,
Chestine Gowdy

Miss Gowdy Explains

In my ninth year of age my widowed mother with her two little girls left her birthplace in New York and journeyed to what seemed then the edge of the frontier. Here she hoped to find better opportunities for earning a living for a family.

She settled in Faribault, Minnesota. Her arrival coincided with the opening of the spring term in the public school and she immediately took my sister and myself to the office of the superintendent of schools to make arrangements for our enrollment in classes. After asking me a few questions and finding that I could do examples in long division he assigned me to a grammar grade. I had probably never heard of grammar and the class I entered was in their term of its study. The lesson for my first day was an exercise on verbs. I learned the definition found in my book "a verb is a word that expresses action, being or state," and had no misgivings as to my ability to apply it.

In the first sentence that came to me I selected the word grief as a verb and was much chagrinned when the teacher exclaimed in a shocked voice, "Why, no, the word grief is a noun." I tried to explain that grief was a state but to no avail. Then came the sentence, Mary is sick, and I was astonished to learn that the word sick was an adjective and the word is a verb.

I then did the only thing left for me to do. I listened to the other pupils, and noticed when the teacher said yes and when no. After a time by means of imitation I could select the right words, and did so without argument and I had no further trouble with grammar.

Soon after my fifteenth birthday I entered Normal School at Winona, Minnesota. I was graduated at the middle of my sixteenth year, and returned to my home in Faribault. The Superintendent of Schools at that time was anxious to introduce teachers with Normal School training, and our good neighbors who were members of the school board were very willing to hire a home girl. I was therefore selected to fill a vacancy and taught a half year before I was seventeen years old. I then taught three years in Intermediate grades. Fortunately our school was so far ahead of the times that grammar was not taught in these grades.

Early in the next year I was notified one Friday afternoon that a teacher in the grammar grades had resigned and that I was to take her place on Monday. A list of her class assignments for that day was left for her successor. As I looked these over I discovered that the work of a grammar class was to select the verbs in a certain right hand page of their readers,

using the same definition that had once brought me so much embarrassment. I sat down and tried to prepare the lesson in advance. I found that I could only select the verbs by the instinctive method I had learned as a child.

In the meantime I had learned somehow, perhaps in my brief course in a Normal School, that the purpose of education is to develop intelligent men and women and not to produce copycats. Thus I was now unwilling to subject children to my own early experience. In my perplexity I went to the principal of the grammar department, who, I knew, had recommended my promotion. This young man was Willis Mason West, who later became head of the history department in the Minnesota State University and is the author of a series of history textbooks.

I opened my book before him and pointed out my difficulties. To my surprise he laughed heartily. He was a young man who had taught in a country school and had found all my difficulties. He had then entered the State University, where he had taken a course in logic and got straightened out.

He explained to me that every sentence must assert at least one attribute of a subject of thought, and that the asserting element is a verb if it is a single word, and a verb phrase if it is a group of words. He told me to teach this, discard the book definition and go ahead. It worked.

For six years more I remained in the Faribault schools, teaching what ever subjects were assigned to me. I remember that often with very little preparation, I conducted classes in arithmetic, astronomy, geography, United States history, physiology, world history, physical geography, rhetoric, algebra, English literature, civil government, and always one class in grammar. In all these subjects I was expected to prepare my pupils for University entrance examinations. Where would such demands be made upon a teacher today?

At the end of this period I was offered a position in the young Normal School at Spearfish, South Dakota. The principal of this school had been a teacher in the Winona Normal School while I was a student there, but I had not happened to be enrolled in any of his classes. He hired me to teach mathematics and Senior English.

I thoroughly enjoyed my four years in the Black Hills. The climate was stimulating, the scenery and life interesting, the school well equipped and the pupils that came to us, friendly and enthusiastic.

At the end of these four years I decided that I ought to have a degree and that I ought not to keep my mother away from Minnesota any longer. So we decided that we would make our home in Minneapolis, where I could enter the State University.

In the University I was registered as a special student and took such subjects as I especially desired. Among these was Old English.

At the middle of the year I was offered a position to teach mathematics in the Minneapolis Central High School. By this time I had come to feel some anxiety about the financial responsibility of maintaining a family

without a fixed income and I accepted.

For eight and a half years I held this position. During this time I acquired, chiefly by examination and seminar courses held on Saturday, enough credits to entitle me to the degree of bachelor of literature. In addition to these two main occupations I taught grammar in the University summer school, marked state examination papers in February and June, and wrote the first edition of my grammar.

In the summer of 1901 Mr. Lord who had recently come from Minnesota to the Charleston School, chanced to meet Mr. Felmley who asked him if he knew of a teacher of grammar. He was an old time friend of Mr. West and had known of my work in Minnesota, and recommended me. I accepted.

During the ten years I was in Normal [now Illinois State University] I taught grammar in the Normal School, and supervised the work of student teachers in the Training School, and did a great deal of Institute work over the state.

In the early part of this time I rewrote the language portion of the State Course of Study for Common Schools, eliminating all technical grammar below the seventh grade. Soon also I made the first revision of my Grammar which is the book you probably know.

In the fall of 1911 I returned with my mother to Faribault, where we established a long desired permanent home among my friends and relatives.

Soon after my return to Faribault, Miss Dexheimer and I collaborated in the first two books of our series of language books and I wrote the third book of the series.

I have much enjoyed a long period of life here with the renewal of old ties, the opportunity for domestic life, and leisure for new interests.

However, a severe illness and financial losses combined to undermine my original vigorous constitution and I am now far from strong, but certainly not unequal to receiving letters as your interviews at Normal caused you to believe.

June 8, 1950

Dear Miss Kelly,

I wanted to answer your letter long ago, but I have had uncomfortable stomach trouble which has made me pretty good for nothing. However I think I shall now be able to answer promptly if I can be of any help to you. I was certainly much interested in your letter.

I am glad you are going to take the course in The Development of Modern English at the University. I took the course in Old English required of everyone who was working towards a B. L. degree. I then took a seminar in the subject and read a good part of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and parts of law codes. This work strengthened my determination to dis-

card the old treatment of auxiliary verbs. In the old grammar we had learned, or at least I had, may, can, must, might, could, would, and should, auxiliary verbs used as mode and tense signs. I saw that historically as well as logically they may be either copulative or attributive verbs, hence my treatment of these words in my grammar.

I have told you of the debt I owe to Mr. West for making it possible for me to appear as a teacher before my first class in grammar. When I wrote the grammar we were both in Minneapolis, our two families being close neighbors and warm friends. As my work progressed we talked it over and he gave me much help, but in the treatment of these words we could not agree. He agreed that I was logically right but advised me politic reasons to stick to the old treatment. I just couldn't.

I have not read Bertrand Russell's book [*An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*] and your quotation was a pleasant surprise to me.

At the University I took a course in Logic but the teacher, head of the department, too, was as formal as any proverbial old-time spinster schoolmarm. We repeated what the book said, no argument, no questions permitted, and I never heard of entity as a technical term. So you see I haven't thought of a transitive verb just as your questions suggested, and I am not sure I understand the question clearly.

In the sentence you cite, "He went to the lawyer to ask whether the report is true." It seems to me that the noun clause, whether the report was true, is the object of the infinitive, ask; the entire phrase to ask whether the report is true, being an adverbial adjunct of the verb went, expressing purpose. In this phrase the word to seems to me to be used as a true preposition instead as the sign of the infinitive.

The sentence presents a problem which I had unaccountably never thought of. It seems to me the classification of the sentence as simple or complex is a matter of definition. The same difficulty occurs in the short sentence He asked whether the report was true.

Would the classification be the same according to these three possible definitions?

A complex sentence is one that contains one main proposition and one or more subordinate/dependent/supplementary propositions? What do you think about this?

Also, will you tell me what semantics means as used today. I find nothing definite in either my old *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* or in *Skeat's Etymological Dictionary*.

Since I began this a second cause of delay has occurred. Please believe that I am much interested in your work and anxious to be of any help that I can.

I will try to be prompt and if I am unable to write will ask Miss Gentry to write it for me.

Yours sincerely,
Chestine Gowdy

New York, N.Y.
July 4, 1950

Dear Miss Gowdy,

Your letter was forwarded to me at Lake Leelanau, Michigan where I spend a few weeks of my summer, and brought it along with me on my circuitous trip from there to here. I traveled by automobile from Traverse City to Ludington, by boat from Ludington to Milwaukee, by automobile to Chicago and Charleston, by train to Cleveland and by plane to New York City arriving exactly six days from the day I left the lake. Yesterday was spend in the frustrating business of seeing or trying to see advisers, program checkers, bursars and what not.

Since I do not like crowds–holiday crowds–and since school doesn't actually start until tomorrow, I can spend the whole day thinking about ideas relevant to our subject, answering your letter, and preparing something to say to my adivser if and when I ever do see her.

First to correct an error which I made in my last letter to you. The topic of the thesis is either "Evidences of Semantical Concepts in Chestine Gowdy's ENGLISH GRAMMAR," or "Applications of Semantic Principles in Chestine Gowdy's ENGLISH GRAMMAR." After you finish this letter you may think one way of working the topic is better than the other. If so, will you let me know which one you like better?

The word semantics is used in two different ways today. Some scholars use semantics to refer to relations between language and its user. They emphasize experiences by which words acquire meaning for an individual, and they are concerned chiefly with avoiding misuse of language in propaganda, advertising, etc. In order to distinguish themselves from pure semanticists they call themselves general semanticists.

The pure semanticist uses the word semantics to mean the interpretability of language–that is, relations between language symbols and the things they stand for. The pure semanticist abstracts from language experience all elements injected by who used the language, and tries to identify the characteristics of sentences that make them interpretable [Gertrude Hendrix letter, 1950]. One of the spin offs for students of their work is the realization that certain sentences such as predictions, value judgments, promises or opinions are neither true or false.

Gertrude Hendrix believes that your ENGLISH GRAMMAR enables one to grasp as insight some of the most fruitful discoveries in semantics now revealed by the powerful instrument—symbolic logic.

I hope that the course which starts tomorrow does as much for me as your courses in Old English did for you. The bulletin describes it as follows: a study of the forces that have shaped the English language in various stages of its development and the important influences upon its grammar and vocabulary. Extensive readings in the external history of the language, with analysis of texts in Old, Middle, and Modern English.

Well, perhaps that is enough for today.

Please do not feel you must answer my letters in a hurry. I wouldn't have you overtax your strength. You have already given me so much help and encouragement that if I had to, I might be able to carry on alone. However, I hope I don't have to. I hope you keep on writing to me whenever you feel well enough to and whenever you get the slightest little bit of an idea. I also hope that you will continue to look for flaws in my statements and point them out to me.

Next time I write, I shall try to have a copy of Bertrand Rusell's book at hand, and I shall quote a passage which I do not understand. Then, you will see ever more clearly why I think there should be some shorter way, using the language which we have, to identify the characteristics of sentences that make them interpretable; and why, also, I think you were on the right track.

Remember me to Miss Gentry and take care of yourself.

Sincerely,
Chenault Kelly

July 12, 1950

Dear Miss Kelly,

I had promised myself to answer your letter of July 4th today, and so was especially glad when the early mail brought me your note of July 10 enclosing the quotation from a letter from Miss Hendrix.

The following answers to questions and comments on other portions of your letter will probably not be very logically arranged but you will be able to make connections.

Of course the classification of sentences as simple, complex, and compound is a matter of definition. I had never thought of the sort of sentence you ask about, but like you it seems better to me to classify sentences which contain a noun clause but no adjective or adverbial ones as simple sentences.

I have never been able to make a definition of transitive verb. The best I can do is to describe the commonest sorts.

I do not remember what text we used in the required course in Old English. It might have been the one you are using.

In my seminar class, consisting of four or five people, we read according to our inclinations and interest A. S. texts. I read a good deal of the *A. S. Chronicle* and parts of law codes. Of course I watched particularly for remnants of inflections which we have lost, and for the development of copulative verbs–verbs that have lost their original attributive sense and retain only the power to assert and to show the attitude of the speaker towards the assertion. I kept notes but, unfortunately have not preserved them.

As to the topic of your thesis I prefer "Evidence of Semantic Concepts in Chestine Gowdy's ENGLISH GRAMMAR." "Applications of Semantic Principles" seems to me to imply a conscious use of theories already developed.

As a matter of fact, my GRAMMAR was a growth unconsciously developed from my childhood experience in a grammar class and from my years of experience in teaching children.

I think I had but three units in my work 1) To give practice in logical thinking, which I hoped would carry over to the study of other subjects: e.g., politics, and would also help to develop a conscience about clear thinking in all fields.

2) To provide a tool which should help in the interpretation of everything read, since sentence analysis involves thought analysis.

3) To give a sufficient knowledge of accepted technical terms to make it possible to apply current rules of speech and so to speak correctly.

——of Logic at Normal scorned my first aim. He declared that the logical study of one subject had no bearing upon the study of another.

If my theories about the study of grammar bear any relation to current thought upon the subject I am pleased. Thank you very much for your definitions of terms; but I am afraid that I am too old (I am approaching my ninetieth birthday) to translate my own experience into them. However, if you can by your thesis make the study of grammar simpler and more usable than it commonly is, I shall be more than pleased. If at any time you think I can be of any use I hope you will let me know.

I believe that in closing I will tell the story of a pleasant experience I recently had since it bears upon our subject.

Perhaps a month ago our door bell rang and our housekeeper announced Winfield Scott. Although I had taught thousands (?) of students at Normal the name immediately recalled a definite personality. Winfield Scott was a boy from the underprivileged extreme south of Illinois. He came to Normal at the opening of a spring term and sat in one of my classes for twelve weeks. At the end of the term I didn't think I had taught him a thing, and he returned to Golconda thinking the same.

However, on the Sunday before the opening of our fall term, he appeared at our door. He explained that when he got home, a country summer school was about to open and that in the grammar class a dispute about some point had arisen and that the class had asked him to come to me for a decision. To my surprise he talked with perfect intelligence. When I held up my hands and exclaimed, "How do you explain it?", he said that although he thought he knew nothing about the subject, when they began the course from the beginning it all opened up to him. He had sat in my class waiting for me to tell him to learn something. Now he saw that he was to see something.

After this I lost track of him. I think he did not stay in Normal long, but he taught in his own county for a long time and then went either to

Champaign or Chicago. He said he studied everything just as he studied grammar. Mathematics was a cinch to him. He finally took his Master's and his Doctor's degrees, and is now teaching in a State Agricultural college in Iowa preparing young men to become County Agents. He, with his wife and two daughters, was on his way to Minneapolis for an outing and stopped to see me.

I hope you are pleasantly located for living conditions, are finding satisfactory work, and are enjoying some of the pleasant attractions that New York has to offer.

I know that all this will keep you busy, but hope you will find time to send me an occasional word.

Yours sincerely,
Chestine Gowdy

III. EVIDENCE OF SEMANTIC CONCEPTS AND MISS GOWDY'S TERMS FOR THEM

On page one of my textbook* I discovered the first evidence of a semantical concept. "But we must never forget that a word and the thing it stands for are very different things."

Miss Gowdy's term for a word was a subject of the sentence. Her term for the thing was the subject of thought.

An example of what both Miss Gowdy and these semanticists were talking about comes to my mind. It's the one about the birds and the bees. Although the words birds and bees are subjects of the sentences they are not the subjects of thoughts in the minds of the parents as they talk to their children.

Furthermore, in the first sixteen pages Miss Gowdy discusses in one way or another the four statement forms which are the keystone of symbolic logic. The four forms are as follows:

1. Mary is a teacher. Mary is happy.—the is of set membership.
2. The book on the table is Robinson Crusoe.—the is of identity.
3. There is a God.—the is of existence.
4. Iron is a mineral.—the is of subset.

Miss Gowdy's term for statements was declarative sentences. Her term for is was the asserting element or copula.

Miss Gowdy's term for set membership was classification and predicate attribute.

Miss Gowdy did not bother to give the fourth statement form a name. Had she done so she might have called it the copula of subclassification. I am only guessing of course.

From now on to end of this paper, I am stepping away from the microphone and am letting Miss Gowdy speak, believing that some readers, especially those who are now teaching English in junior high school and senior high school may find an idea or two in the Gowdy way to help them present their own ideas about language, composition, and grammar.

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*Chestine Gowdy, ENGLISH GRAMMAR, Revised Edition 1909, Allyn and Bacon, New York, Boston and Chicago. All footnotes in this review preceded by an asterisk (*) are my notes; those preceded by standard superscript numbers are Miss Gowdy's notes from her texts. E.C.K.

IV. THE GOWDY WAY OF TEACHING CONCEPTS OF MODERN LOGIC AND SEMANTIC ORIGIN

The Declarative Sentence. *

2. **Development.**–I have in mind an animal. I wish to make you think of it. In what ways might I do this? Let me use a word, dog.

I have in mind an action. I will represent it by the word running. I am thinking of the action as being performed by the dog. I can show this to you in many ways.

1. The dog is running.
2. The running dog.
3. The running of the dog.
4. The dog runs.
5. The dog was running.
6. The dog running.
7. The dog has been running.

I have in mind a quality of the same dog. The word gentle represents it.

Think of as many groups of words as you can that show that gentleness is a quality of the dog.

I am thinking of a condition of the dog. The word sick represents it. Show in as many ways as you can that sickness is a condition of the dog.

I am thinking of the place of the dog. These words, behind the barn, represent it. Show in as many ways as you can the relation between the dog and the barn.

I am thinking of the class to which the dog belongs. Show in as many ways as you can that it belongs to the class of spaniels. 1) The dog is a spaniel. 2) The dog, a spaniel.

In what respect are all the groups of words that we have considered alike? (They all show something about the dog.)

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*Chestine Gowdy, ENGLISH GRAMMAR, Revised Edition, 1909, passim.

Let us compare the first seven expressions. Each shows something, an action, of the dog. But they do not all do this in the same way. If you were to put these seven expressions into two groups according to the way they do this, how should you group them?

You will see that the first, fourth, fifth, and seventh expressions are sentences. They assert (declare, state, predicate) that the action is performed by the dog. You would use these groups of words if you thought your hearer did not know the fact.

You will see, too, that the second, third, and sixth are not sentences. They assume (take for granted) that the act is performed by the dog. You would use them if you thought the hearer already knew the fact and you wanted merely to call it to his mind before going on to tell him something new.

Examine the other groups of words about the dog and decide which ones assert something about the dog and so are sentences, and which ones merely take something for granted.

Exercise 1.

1. Think of the first president of the United States. By what word or group of words can you represent him? Think of one of his qualities. Represent this by a word. Assert the quality of the man. Assume it.
2. Think of some other person. Represent this person by some word or group of words. Think of some class to which the person belongs. First assert and then assume the classification of the person.
3. Assert (1) the condition of a child, (2) the material of a dress.
4. Assert (1) an action of fishes, (2) a quality of an apple.
5. First assert and then assume the place of a letter.

3. **A Declarative Sentence** is a group of words that asserts something about something else.

In the preceding exercise you have asserted quality, condition, action, place, material, and class of other things.

Exercise 2.

Which of the following groups of words are declarative sentences? In regard to each sentence answer (1) What is something asserted about? and (2) What is asserted,–a quality, a condition, an act, place, material, or class? Tell in regard to each group of words that is not a sentence what it assumes something about.

1. Birds fly.
2. Birds flying.
3. Birds are flying.
4. Birds flew.
5. Flying birds.
6. The discoverer of America was courageous. (Answer the first questions by one word.)
7. Mary has been sad.
8. The earth revolves.
9. The governor of Illinois is a Republican.
10. Children playing.
11. The patience of the mother was beautiful.
12. The book on the table.
13. The apples have fallen.
14. The pin was silver.
15. That merchant was honest.
16. Your sister has been in the garden.
17. You will be sick.
18. There are the girls.
19. Many birds flying here and there.
20. The earth is a planet.
21. She is thoughtless.
22. For hours Alice studied her lesson.
23. A large black dog running down the street and barking.
24. The child sitting by the window is tired.
25. This ring is gold.

4. **A Subject of Thought** is anything about which an assertion can be made.

The sentence, Mary was pleased with the beauty of the flower, mentions three subjects of thought, Mary, beauty, and the flower. About which one is the assertion made? Show that an assertion can be made about each of the others.

5. **The Subject of Thought** is that about which a particular assertion is made.

Which of the three subjects of thought that are mentioned in the sentence, Mary admired the beauty of the flower, is the subject of thought? In studying Exercise 2, you named the subject of thought when you answered the first question.

6. **An Attribute** of a thing is anything (any peculiarity or characteristic) that we can assert about it; for example, a quality, a condition, an act, classification, material, or place.

I am thinking of a subject of thought. I will tell you some of its attributes. See if you can make a mental picture of it.

It is soft, red, hollow–(qualities).
It is soiled, faded, old–(conditions).
It is a sphere–(class).

It is rubber–(material).
It bounds and rolls–(actions).
It is under the table–(place).

By knowing these attributes, you can make a pretty good picture of the thing. So you see what people mean when they say that a thing is made up of its attributes.

Exercise 3.

Think of some subject of thought. Make a long list of its attributes. In class you may read your list and see if the other pupils can name the subject of thought by knowing its attributes. Put last the ones most likely to give your secret away.

Make a list of attributes of some tree. Of some animal.

Three Elements Essential to Every Sentence.

9. **The Subject of a Sentence** is the part that represents that about which something is asserted, or the subject of thought.

In the sentence, The discoverer of America was courageous, something is asserted about Columbus. He is the subject of thought. The words, the discoverer of America, represent him. They are the subject of the sentence. If we are to choose one of these four words for the subject, what must it be?

10. **The Predicate Attribute** of a sentence is the part that represents that which is asserted of the subject of thought, or the attribute.

In the sentence, The discoverer of America was courageous, the quality of courage is asserted of Columbus. The word courageous represents this quality, and so is the predicate attribute. The sentence, The children are frightened, asserts a condition of the children. The word frightened represents the condition, and so is the predicate attribute.

Each of the following sentences asserts two attributes of the subject of thought. Each has, therefore, two predicate attributes.

(1) She is happy and excited.
(Here two conditions are asserted.)
(2) She stopped, perplexed.
(Here an action and a condition are asserted.)

11. The Copula is the asserting element in the sentence.

It may be (1) a single word (John is running), (2) a group of words (John has been running), or (3) it may be combined with the predicate attribute (John runs).

One word often does two kinds of work in a sentence, and so is both predicate attribute and copula, just as one man often does two kinds of work in a society, and so is both secretary and treasurer.

In the sentence, John runs, the word runs represents the action that is asserted, and therefore is the predicate attribute. It also asserts, and is therefore the copula. Notice that if we change runs to running, we do not have a sentence. Running merely expresses the action; it does not assert.

Exercise 5.*

Decide which of the following groups of words are sentences. Try to tell what sort of attribute each predicate attribute represents. Refer to Section 17, if necessary.

1. The flower is delicate.
2. The man is unhappy.
3. The pipes are lead.
4. The leaves of the plant are glossy. (†12.)
5. The man is very old. (†12.)
6. The boys build a snow fort.
7. That man is of great age.
8. That man is Mr. Allen. (†13.)
9. That man is a lawyer. (†13.)
10. You will be tired.
11. Your doll is here.
12. Children are playing.
13. The children played.
14. Silent was every child.
15. Flies are insects.
16. A beautiful bird singing.
17. The child was sleepy.
18. This book is the Jungle Book.
19. The floods came.
20. James Russell Lowell was a poet.
21. Brilliant were the leaves of the vine.
22. The pan shines.
23. This mineral is gold.
24. Into his soul the vision flew.
25. God is just.
26. God is. (†14.)
27. There is a God. (†15.)
28. There are honest men. (†15.)
29. This is my dog. (†15.)

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*There are 198 exercises with over 3,500 sentences in a book of only 289 pages. I did not count the sentences in the developing or model exercises, in the discussions or in the summaries.

30. The mistake was of no importance.
31. Green and broad was every tent.
32. There are many stars.
33. Mary broke the window. (†16.)
34. The window was broken by Mary. (†16.)
35. The cattle are in the corn.
36. The sick man rests.
37. Pleasant was the air above him.
38. The cat has caught the mouse.
39. The mouse has been caught.
40. The book is Robinson Crusoe.
41. Swiftly came the storm.
42. The mechanic was dismissed by his employer.
43. There have been two storms already.
44. The leaves of the maple have fallen.
45. The man writing a letter.
46. The house was injured by the storm.
47. There is John.
48. There are idlers everywhere.
49. This book is a history.
50. The spoons were silver.
51. Mary has been weak and discouraged.
52. Cold would the winter be.
53. The child was bitten by a dog.
54. The house will be white.
55. She has been in poor health.
56. On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.

12. **The Base of the Subject or of the Predicate Attribute.**–When the entire subject or predicate attribute consists of more than one word, there is generally some one word that can be chosen as the base, or the main part of the expression.[2]

In Sentence 4, the entire subject is the words, the leaves of the plant, but the word leaves is the base of the expression; that is, it can serve alone as the subject.

In Sentence 5, the words very old are the complete predicate attribute; but the one word old is the base of the expression. It can serve alone as predicate attribute. The words, Man is old, made a sentence. In Sentence 6, it is the act of building a snow fort that is asserted, but we may take the one word built to express the act. In Sentence 7, there is no one word that can serve as predicate attribute. The words of great age are all needed to express condition.

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[2]When the terms subject and predicate attribute are used in the following pages, they generally refer to the base of the expression.

13. The purpose of Sentence 8 in the preceding exercise is to identify the subject of thought, or to tell the name by which he is distinguished from other men. The name Mr. Allen is called a predicate attribute of identification. The purpose of Sentence 9 is to classify the subject of thought. It puts him into the class of lawyers. The word lawyer is a predicate attribute of classification.

14. **The Word Is** may be merely the copula (Exercise 5, Sentence 25), or it may be both copula and predicate attribute expressing existence (Sentence 26).

The purpose of Sentence 26 is to assert the existence of God; but the purpose of Sentence 25 is to assert a quality, justice, of God. Here there is no question of His existence. The word just is therefore the predicate attribute, and the word is expresses the existence, it is the predicate attribute. Since it asserts, it is the copula also.

15. **The Word There.**–The only purpose of Sentence 27 in Exercise 5 is to assert the existence of a God. The thought can be expressed without the word there; thus, God is. In Sentence 28, There are honest men, the existence of honest men is asserted. The sentence means, Honest men are. The words is and are in these sentences are both copula and predicate attribute, and the word there is unnecessary. It is merely a form word. It changes the form of the sentence, causing the subject to come after the copula and predicate attribute.

Often, however, the word there is used to express place. The purpose of Sentence 29 is to assert the place of the dog; therefore the word there is the predicate attribute and is is the copula only.

16. In telling what a predicate attribute expresses, we must be sure to tell just what it shows of the **subject of thought.** In Sentences 33 and 34 the predicate attributes both express action, the act of breaking; but in one case the act is performed by the subject of thought, while in the other the act affects, or changes in some way, the subject of thought.

17. **Partial List of Kinds of Predicate Attributes.**–In Exercise 5 you should have found predicate attributes that express quality, condition, action performed by the subject of thought, action affecting the subject of thought, material, existence, and place, as well as predicate attributes of classification and identification.[3]

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[3]Pupils may not see at first that the term act includes mental acts. Thinking, imagining, dreaming, and loving are examples of such acts. Seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting involve mind action.

The term act includes also the producing of an effect. The work tired me means that the work did something–it produced an effect upon me, or made me tired. In this sentence, tired expresses an action performed by the work. Similar actions are expressed in these sentences: Poverty humbles pride, The rain cooled the air, and The soda sweetened the milk.

Exercise 6.

Write sentences to illustrate the different kinds of predicate attributes described in Section 17.

18. **Uses of the Copula.**–The copula may do many things besides assert. If the copula merely asserted, the same copula would do for all sentences. Sections 19-25 explain some of its other uses.

19. **Development Exercise.**

1. Mary is happy.
2. Mary was happy.
3. Mary will be happy.
4. Honesty is a virtue.
5. All men are mortal.

Why are different copulas used in the first three sentences? What is it that is present according to the first, and past according to the second, and future according to the third? How much of the time is honesty a virtue? What time is expressed by the copula in Sentences 4 and 5?

20. The copula generally limits the time to present, past, or future time; but is may express all time.

21. **Development Exercise.**

1. Mary is happy.
2. May may be (is perhaps) happy.
3. Mary seems to be (is apparently) happy.
4. Mary must be (is almost surely) happy.
5. Honesty is a virtue.
6. All men are mortal.

Why did the speaker use the copula is in the first sentence and may be in the second? What was he certain of in the first case and doubtful of in the second?

Is the third copula more nearly like the first or the second? Why? Which shows more doubt, may be or seems to be? Can you tell why?

Does is in the fifth sentence show certainty or doubt? Does are in the sixth show certainty or doubt? Certainty of what? Is any one but the speaker certain of honesty's being a virtue? Of all men's being mortal? Does the speaker of the last two sentences feel that he is giving information?

22. The copula generally expresses certainty (Sentence 1, Section 21) or some degree of doubt (Sentences 2, 3, 4, Section 21) in the mind of the speaker; but occasionally it asserts something as known by all people instead of by the speaker alone (Sentences 5 and 6, Section 21).

It is apparent that we can now make a more exact definition of declarative sentences than the one given in the footnote on page 7. A declarative sentence is a group of words that asserts with some degree of doubt or certainty an attribute of a subject of thought.

Exercise 7.

Select the copulas and tell what time they express (present, past, future, or all time), and whether they express doubt in the mind of the speaker, or certainty in his mind, or certainty in the minds of all.

1. She has been very busy.
2. She may be ready now.
3. She will come soon.
4. That ragged man must be tramp.
5. The house will have been finished a month tomorrow.
6. She seems sincere.
7. She has already sent the letter.
8. Iron is a mineral.
9. You may regret this.
10. She seems to have been mistaken.
11. I shall remember your kindness.
12. Stars are suns.

V. COMPOSITION AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE*

When Donna Witmer found a copy of Gowdy, LESSONS IN ENGLISH, Book III and lent it to me, I wanted to publish a revised edition 1990. I couldn't do that so instead I selected a few excerpts that I believe some readers of this paper might enjoy reading.

Composition

To compose is to put parts together and so make a new thing. A composition, then, is something that is made by putting parts together. A piece of music, a picture, a poem, or a story is a composition. In school, as you know, we use the word most often to mean an exercise that is prepared by putting together words and sentences. But you must not think that composition is only the preparation of formal exercises. Whenever you try to express your thoughts, whether at home, on the playground, or in any one of your recitations, you are doing good or bad composition work.

What Makes Composition Good. The great soldier, the Duke of Wellington, gave this concise advise [sic] concerning composition: Have something to say and say it. Do you see that he gave two distinct rules?

"Have something to say" means, Have something worthwhile to say,–something that you have thought about and are interested in and want to say. When you talk, people want to hear what you think not what some one else thinks or what you believe you ought to think. A short way to express this thought is Be sincere.

The second rule means, Choose words that say just what you mean, and put them together into sentences that are easily understood; that is, Be clear. The simplest words that express the thought exactly are generally best; and it is easier to make short sentences clear than long ones.

There are two other rules that you will surely agree to. First, Good composition must be interesting. People will not listen to you unless you say what you have to say in a way that attracts and holds their attention.

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*Chestine Gowdy, LESSONS IN ENGLISH, Book III, Allyn and Bacon, New York, Boston, Chicago, 1912, passim.

Second, Good composition must be correct. This means that it must follow the customs most common among educated persons. It will be a great disadvantage to you, as you grow older, if you cannot follow this usage. Think of some ways in which it will be bad for you if, for example, you use words in the wrong sense, or if you do not use such forms as *is* and *are*, *did* and *done*, and *he* and *him* correctly, or if you cannot follow the rules for punctuation.

Telling Stories. One of the pleasantest ways for a group of friends to spend an hour or two together is for each one to tell a favorite story. Some time soon your teacher will let you spend a recitation hour or two in this way. You see you must choose short stories if each is to have a chance. Still, each story should be more than an anecdote. The following rules may help you to do well:

1. **Select a story that you yourself like.** Perhaps you will choose from the following list:

An incident from Aldrich's *Story of a Bad Boy*; a Greek myth or an incident in the life of a Greek hero; a story you have heard one of your grandparents tell; a Robin Hood or King Arthur story; a story you liked when you were a little child, for example, *The Three Bears*, *The Cat and the Parrot*, *Red Ridinghood*, or a fairy story; one of Kipling's or Ernest Thompson Seton's animal stories; some recent story of heroism.

2. **Know the events of your story perfectly,** so that you can think of your hearers and the way you are telling it.

3. **Practice telling it beforehand.** You may tell it to yourself, to some member of your family, or to some other friend.

4. **Have a beginning, a middle, and an end.** The very short introduction should show the situation at the opening of the story. The short conclusion should make the situation at the end very clear. The body should give the events that bring about the change.

5. **Make the story move rapidly.** Do not put in a single detail that is not necessary to make vivid the events or the spirit of the story.

6. **Do not be afraid to use** any especially good words or phrases that are in the original story.

7. **Use short sentences,** and **make a brief pause after each.**

Inventing the Body of a Story

The American Magazine recently had a short-story contest. The following passages are the first and last paragraph of one of the prize stories. Show that the first one is a good introduction, and the second one a good conclusion.

"Mr. R., his wife, and eight children were living in Iowa, five miles from the city of Grinnell, on as pretty a farm as one would wish to see. After a very hot day, the three littlest folks being fast asleep in bed, the older members of the family sat upon the porch in the early evening, longing for a cooling breeze. The air had been hot and lifeless all day and sunset brought little relief, though gathering clouds gave promise of a cooling shower."

"It is almost unbelievable that a cyclone that had scattered their cozy home along the prairie for a mile or more and had not spared enough to make a respectable hen house, had left every one of that large family alive and whole, except for a few minor bruises."

Write the body of the story. Imagine a series of events that might have happened between the two situations. You might tell (1) of the approach of a storm, (2) the plan for escape, (3) the crash when the storm struck, (4) the experiences of the different members of the family during the storm, (5) the scene after the storm had passed, (6) the gathering together of the family.

Get a vivid picture of the scenes yourself. Give only striking details. Make the story move rapidly. Choose words that will make others see what you have imagined. As you write, think of the audience to whom you are to read your story.

When you have made the story as interesting as you can, examine again what you have written to see if it is in good form.

The class may decide who has the most interesting story, and perhaps your teacher will tell which story is the most nearly correct in matters of form.

The Useless Bolts

The second year that the new Model T was on the market, a driver was sent with a stock car to make the run over the Rockies to San Francisco and return within the shortest possible time. On the day when he returned, his car, covered with dust, mud, and oil, and somewhat battered from the rough trip, was brought to the home office for inspection. Quickly Mr. Ford noticed the absence of three small bolts in one side of the frame. He inserted a finger into one of the holes and saw that it was rusty. Then he ascertained from the driver that the bolts had been lost on the westward trip, between Denver and the Rockies. One of the factory superintendents, who was standing near, procured bolts, and was replacing the three that had been lost, while Mr. Ford, whose secretary had brought for him at his request the master blue prints from the drafting room, took his pencil and eliminated the three bolts on each side from the specifications. As the factory superintendent looked up, Mr. Ford remarked:

"If we make 40,000 cars next year, there is a saving of one fourth of a million bolts. I'll wager you never made so much money in three minutes in the shop. It is evident that if a car can go over the Rockies and back without these bolts, they are not needed there."

Substitute in the passage other verbs for the following: noticed, inserted, ascertained, procured, eliminated, remarked. Do you find any equally good?

What are master blue prints? Specifications?

When a certain university president, who is an entertaining talker in both public and private life, hears or reads a good story, he makes opportunities to repeat it several times very soon. Then it is his, and it comes readily to his mind when he really wants to use it. Can't you find some one to tell this story to?

Art and Business Principles. The same article from which the passage in the above exercise is taken gives a second characteristic quotation from Mr. Ford. "I'll tell you what any piece that isn't absolutely necessary will do–rattle." Express in a single sentence the business rule illustrated by Mr. Rumely's story.

It is often thought that good business and good art are very far apart. As a matter of fact some fundamental principles of the two are similar. The Englishman, William Morris, was a poet and also a designer and manufacturer of artistic house furnishings and decorations. He urged this rule upon homemakers: "Never put into your house anything that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." Why didn't he say "or know to be beautiful?"

Writing Stories. A written story may differ much from one that is told. In telling a story, especially if it is told to a number of persons, the events must be made the main thing. It is heard but once, and if the thread of the story is lost, interest is gone. But written stories are to be read at leisure, and we may go back and re-read if we wish. In them commonplace events may be made entertaining by the use of interesting details, bits of description, and by little asides that show how the writer feels about the events he is narrating. Some of the best story writing is in the form of letters.

Unity. You have learned that in story telling you should include no detail that is not necessary to the clearness or interest of your story, and that in description you should include nothing that does not help to give the impression you want your word picture to leave. The following is a simple way of saying all this:

Good composition should possess oneness or unity.

This quality is even more important in explanation and argument than in narration and description. We do not succeed in teaching or convincing people if we constantly take their attention from the points we are trying to make, by introducing unimportant details or entirely unconnected matter. Each sentence and each paragraph should have a definite purpose.

Slang. Frequently some imaginative person hits upon a new and striking way of saying an old thing. The new and vivid form of expression is generally figurative. It involves a comparison that suddenly pops into the speaker's head. Other persons adopt the novel saying and finally it becomes a new bit of slang.

Occasionally a piece of slang meets a real need; that is, it expresses a common thought in a more lively way than the old form. In this case, intelligent persons adopt it; and after a time it comes to be accepted by educated persons everywhere as correct and effective English, and thus adds to the wealth of our language. A native Westerner wished to tell a precise and literal-minded judge, who had recently come to the West, that he had known of the flight of a certain criminal. This was his first way of expressing the thought: "I just knew that that man had hit the wind." Seeing that the Easterner looked perplexed, the ranchman tried again: "Why, I was sure he had struck the high places." Now the speaker had surely suggested his thought in two picturesque ways. The expressions "hit the Wind" and "struck the high places" help to give vivid pictures of a man fleeing. We might expect one or both of them to become "good English."

But, unfortunately, some persons are too lazy to express their thoughts clearly, others cannot do so, and still others strive to attract attention by using striking expressions whether they fit the occasion or not. Such persons are likely to seize upon the Westerner's expressions and to use them so often where they are not appropriate that they come to have no meaning any where. If this should happen, the sooner they are forgotten the better.

Though we must acknowledge that some slang is expressive, we must acknowledge also that much of it is senseless, and that all of it is senseless when it is used where it doesn't fit. And the great trouble with slang is that it generally is used where it doesn't fit. Do you have some favorite expression that you have formed the habit of using on all sorts of occasions? And if you have, do you ever stop to think whether or not it really says something that you wish to say? And have you, worse still, several such bits of slang? If you have, you can hardly imagine how tiresome your speech becomes to those who like to hear folks say what they mean.

But the fact that your habit of using senseless slang is unpleasant to others is not so important as the other fact that it is keeping you from getting an exact and varied vocabulary. If you stop to think, you will remember that often when you really want to say something in a pleasing and dignified way you have no words with which to do so. Nothing but a patchwork of senseless slang comes to your mind, and you can only stammer and look embarrassed. Every year you will feel your disadvantage more keenly.

Class Discussion

Watch your own speech and that of others and bring to class definite illustrations of the senseless use of slang. Be ready to talk about them in class. Tell whether you think the speakers used them just for the sake of saying something when they had nothing to say, or whether they had real thoughts that they wished to express. In the latter case, suggest some clear and correct way to expressing the thought. See if the same slang expression is used to express different thoughts. Bring also illustrations of what seems to you a proper use of slang.

A Description

Read the following description of the "dropping song" of a mocking bird. Try to see and hear the bird as you read the description.

"Dropping Song" of the Mocking Bird

Whoever has closely observed the mocking bird has noted its "mounting song," a very frequent performance, wherein the songster begins on the lowest branch of a tree and appears to mount on its music from bough to bough, until the highest spray is reached, where it will sit for many minutes flinging upon the air an ecstatic stream of song. But he who has never heard the "dropping song" has not discovered the last possibility of the mocking bird's voice. It is, in a measure, the reverse of the "mounting song," beginning where the other leaves off; but it is much rarer. I have heard it but four times during all my rambles: once in Georgia, twice in the immediate vicinity of Tallahassee, Florida, and once near the St. Mark's River. My attention was first called to this interesting performance by an aged negro who was with me on a camping trip. One morning, as a burst of music rang out from a haw thicket near our extemporized camp, he cried out, "Lis'n, mars, lis'n, dar, he's a droppin', sho's you bo'n!" I could not see the bird, and before I could get my attention fixed upon the song it had ended. However, Uncle Joe gave me a graphic description of the bird's song and actions, and after that I was on the outlook for an opportunity to verify his statements.

I have not kept the exact date of my first actual observation, but it was late in April, or very early in May; for the crab-apple trees, growing wild in the Georgian hills, were in full bloom, and spring had come to stay. I had been out since the first sparkle of daylight. The sun was rising, and I had been standing quite still for some minutes, watching a mocking bird that was singing in a snatchy broken way, as it fluttered about in a thick-topped crab-apple tree thirty yards distant from us. Suddenly the bird leaped like a flash to the highest spray of the tree and began to flutter in a trembling, peculiar way, with its wings half spread and its feathers puffed out. Almost immediately there came a strange gurgling series of notes, liquid and sweet, that seemed to express utter rapture. Then the bird dropped, with a backward motion, from the spray, and began to fall slowly and somewhat spirally down through the bloom-covered boughs. Its progress was quite like that of a bird wounded to death by a shot, clinging here and there to a twig, quivering and weakly striking with its wings as it fell; but all the time it was pouring forth the most exquisite gushes and thrills of song; not at all like its usual medley of imitations, but strikingly unique. The bird appeared to be dying of an ecstasy of song. The lower it fell, the louder and more rapturous became its voice, until the song ended on the ground in a burst of incomparable vocal power. It remained for a short time, after its song was ended, crouching where it had fallen, with its wings outspread, and quivering and panting as if utterly exhausted; then it leaped boldly into the air and flew away into an adjacent thicket.

–Maurice Thompson. Adapted.

A grammar school boy wrote this sentence as the introduction to a composition:

> "We all like to hear our grandparents tell about the good old days when they were young; but if all they say is true, I believe I had rather live now than then."

The body of the composition was to be a comparison of a certain journey as taken some sixty years ago by the boy's grandfather and the same journey as the boy might take it today.

Write a similar composition, or vary the introduction and write a composition to fit your sentence. You might change the words now than then to then than now. If you do, what conjunction must you change also? Why?

If your parents or grandparents once lived in some other country than the United States, you might contrast their life there with yours in America. In any case make your story and introduction fit, and write a suitable conclusion of a sentence or two.

Topics For Compositions

1. Our Field Day.
   - I. Introduction
     - (a) When it came.
     - (b) Interest in it.
   - II. Body.
     - (a) Preparation for the day.
     - (b) The kind of weather we had.
     - (c) The crowd.
     - (d) How the exercises were conducted.
     - (e) The different events.
   - III. How we felt when it was over.
2. A detailed account of some one event of Field Day exercises.
3. Girls have better times than boys. Explain.
4. Boys have better times than girls. Explain.
5. Feeding some kind of stock. Explain.
6. An ideal kitchen. What qualities must it have? How can they be secured?
7. How to test corn or some other seed for planting.
8. How to transplant a tree.
9. How to fight fires.

Class Discussion

Many persons have some favorite subject of thought and conversation. They talk about it on all possible occasions. With some it is the need of a particular reform. With others it is a favorite study or sport or some special kind of work. These persons are said to have hobbies.

One man, whose regular work was somewhat monotonous, kept life interesting by frequently taking up a new hobby. At different times he was deeply interested in photography, microscopic animal and vegetable life, raising dahlias, an obscure author, and the study of the Welsh language.

Have a class conversation in which you give illustrations of hobbies and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having a hobby.

Topics For Composition

Do not use the same kind of sentence constantly. Let some sentences be short and others longer. Let some be in the natural order with the subject and its adjuncts followed by the predicate and all its adjuncts. Let others be more irregular. But, above all, let each be clear and well constructed.

1. My hobby.
2. Some one else's hobby.
3. Write a letter to some one of your own age whose home is among entirely different surroundings from yours. Tell him about some interesting thing that you are familiar with but that he has never seen. Try to interest him. The following topics may help you to decide on a subject:

The ocean, a big prairie, mountains, a mine, a lake, a cattle ranch, a big department store, a lumber camp, a mill or factory, a dairy farm, an art museum, a nursery, a city park, a tenement house district, a vineyard, a fruit farm or ranch, a big forest.

4. Write a letter to some one of your own age whom you have never seen. Tell him about yourself and your home, so that he will feel acquainted with you.
5. The evils of war.
6. A report of some recent article in a newspaper or magazine.
7. Read Burns' poem, *For a'that and a'that.* Write a story to illustrate the truth of the line, "A man's a man for a'that."

Oral Composition

Tell the story in some poem. The following list may help; you to select one:

1. The Gift of Tritemius,–Whittier.
2. Rhoecus,–Lowell.
3. The Vision of Sir Launfal,–Lowell.
4. Herve Riel,–Browning.
5. The Legend Beautiful,–Longfellow.
6. The Norman Baron,–Longfellow.
7. How the Old Horse Won the Bet,–Holmes.
8. Sohrab and Rustum,–Matthew Arnold.
9. Little Giffen,–Francis Orrery Ticknor.
10. Incident of the French Camp,–Browning.

Telling the story as directly and naturally as you can. Let the class see if you use any figures of speech.

Written Composition

1. Write a paragraph or two describing a person who, either in physical or moral characteristics, reminds you of a particular kind of tree; for example, an oak, a silver birch, an elm, a white pine, a Scotch pine, or a poplar.
2. Write a paragraph or two describing a person who in some respects resembles a particular kind of animal; for example, a Newfoundland dog, a sheep dog, a bulldog, a poodle, a wolf, an ox, a tiger, a blue jay, a lion, a parrot, a hummingbird, a robin.

Perhaps, after you have written your description, you can write a simile expressing the comparison in a sentence.

Conversation About a Picture*

The girl in this picture is a French peasant girl. Her name is Joan of Arc. Look at her carefully and see how good a word picture of her you can give.

Where is she? What is she doing? What makes you know? Can you tell what she is listening to? Do you see any one else in the picture? Describe him. Do you think Joan sees him? What must he be? What can an angel in shining armor have to say to Joan?

If you cannot find out about the life of Joan of Arc yourself, your teacher will tell you her story. You will then be able to think of an appropriate name for the picture. Perhaps you can find another picture of Joan in which she is dressed in armor.

Figurative Language

The word *poet* means *maker*. A true poet must thus be original. He sees

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*This picture found on following page, which was used by Chestine Gowdy in her LESSONS IN ENGLISH, Book Three, was purchased for Eastern as a gift from the Class of 1923. It presently hangs over the mantlepiece in the Foundation House at Eastern Illinois University.

in the world around him things that others do not see, and his mind is full of beautiful and elevating thoughts and pleasant fancies. Then, he must not only express his thoughts clearly, as the prose writer also must do, but he must express them in beautiful and appropriate language as well as in rhythmical form. Perhaps you have noticed that in the best poems words are chosen with great care; and that, on the whole, poets use more figures of speech than prose writers.

The poet James Russell Lowell has described the poet and his mission in the poem *Shepherd of King Admetus*. You can surely find the poem, and you will enjoy reading it.

Another writer of delicate verse has told us in the two dainty stanzas given in the following that it is not easy to express our best thoughts in the form of poetry.

Read the poem thoughtfully and try to understand the comparison that it makes.

Caught

Birds are singing round my window
Tunes the sweetest ever heard,
And I hang my cage there daily,
But I never catch a bird.

So with thoughts my brain is peopled,
And they sing there all day long;
But they will not fold their pinions
In the little cage of song!

Richard Henry Stoddard.

You see that the entire poem is a single extended simile. What are the birds likened to? The difficulty of getting the birds to enter a cage?

Why do you think the poem is called *Caught*? Do you suppose the author was glad that he tried to express his thought in verse?

You have been told repeatedly that one of the most important habits for you to gain in your study of language, is that of saying just what you mean. You will perhaps be surprised to be told now that the best writers often say something that, if we take the words in their ordinary meaning, is very different from what the authors really mean. You may be still more surprised to know that they do this intentionally, and that by so doing they express their real thoughts more beautifully or more strikingly than if they had used words in their usual sense.

A turning of words from their common every-day meaning for the sake of making a thought more striking is called figurative language, or a figure of speech. When words are used in their ordinary sense, language is said to be literal.

You have often read, heard, and even yourself used figurative language

Joan of Arc

without thinking of it as being in any way peculiar. Notice a few illustrations of figures of speech.

Leigh Hunt in one of his poems says that the presence of an angel within the moonlight in Abou Ben Adhem's cell made the room like a lily in bloom. Now a room surely is not in most respects like a lily, still the poet's words given us the beautiful picture that he wished to convey.

Emerson in his Concord Hymn says:

> "Here once the embattled farmers stood
> And fired the shot heard round the world."

Of course the shot wasn't really "heard round the world"; but we are more impressed by the author's thought than if he had said in plain matter-of-fact fashion that the influence of the shot was felt throughout the world.

Whittier in his poem, *The Barefoot Boy*, calls shoes, "prison cells of pride"; and Holmes in *The Chambered Nautilus* calls the shell of the nautilus a "ship of pearl."

You have heard a quiet child called a mouse; a stubborn man, a bulldog; a cheerful person, a ray of sunshine. You have heard a flower garden described as gay, and the wind as mournful.

Mrs. Hemans in *The Voice of Spring* makes spring talk as if it were a person:

> "I come! I come! Ye have called me long.
> I come o'er the mountains with light and song!"

Longfellow addresses a river as if it were a person:

> "Thou hast taught me, silent River!
> Many a lesson, deep and long."

All these are examples of figurative language. Two of the more common kinds of figures of speech are called the **simile** and the **metaphor.**

A Simile is a figure of speech in which things that are in the most respects unlike are said to be alike. The comparison is made definitely by the use of *like*, or *as*, or *so*; thus:

> "Like a merry guest's farewell, the day in brightness passed."

> "How far that little candle throws its beams;
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

You must not think that a simile is used whenever two things are said to be alike. When a person says that one apple is like another, he has used plain, or literal, language, for the two apples are in most respects alike.

A Metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is spoken of as if

it were another. The two things are alike in some respects but different in most particulars. A metaphor is an assumed simile, like or as never being used to express the similarity.

When Lowell says:

> "There's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
> To be some happy creature's palace."

he calls leaves and blades of grass palaces, and so uses a metaphor.

When you say that a person who is cross or rude is a bear, you have used a metaphor; when you say he is like a bear when things go wrong, you have used a simile.

Personification.–The kind of metaphor in which lower animals or inanimate things are spoken of as if they were persons is called personification.

Longfellow's poem, *The River Charles*, *The Voice of Spring* by Mrs. Hemans, and Van Dyke's *The Ruby Crowned Kinglet*, are examples of continued personification.

Exercise 228

Explain the figurative language found in these sentences.

1. The little bird sits at his door in the sun.
   Atilt like a blossom among the leaves.

2. I watched the engineer oil and stroke the sinews of his monster.

3. Well knows the fair and friendly moon
   The band that Marion leads.

4. He is surely a live wire.

5. Thy waves of blue
   From celestial seas above thee
   Take their own celestial blue

6. The clouds are at play in the azure space,
   And their shadows at play on the bright green vale.

7. The station shook with the iron coughing of engines.

8. Winter giveth the fields and the trees, so old,
   Their beards of icicles and snow.

9. The breaking waves dashed high
   On a stern and rock-bound coast.

10. With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin.

11. But Robin's here, in coat of brown.

12. Like an army defeated
    The snow has retreated.

13. The robin is plastering his house hard by.

14. As one lamp lighteth another nor grows less,
    So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

Exercise 229

Read the following lines from the prelude to Longfellow's *Evangeline*. Learn what you can about Druids and harpers. Look up any words that you do not know the meaning of. Then study the lines again part by part, and find in them these examples of figures of speech: (1) five similes, (2) two personifications, (3) several nouns and adjectives that are used figuratively. Find also several adjectives that are used literally.

> This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
> Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
> Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
> Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
> Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
> Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.
> This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
> Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
> Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,–
> Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands.
> Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
> Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!
> Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October

Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er
the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of
Grand-Pre.

The Use of Figurative Language.–The occasional use of good and fresh figures of speech, if they seem to be introduced easily and naturally, adds to the beauty, force, and effectiveness of speech.

But there are dangers connected with the use of figurative language. If a figure is worked out laboriously, it is seldom effective; and those figures that we use almost unconsciously have generally been heard so often before that they have become stale and uninteresting. Then, too, if we do not think clearly, as well as quickly, we shall be in danger of using what are called "mixed metaphors." The person who said that a public speaker "uttered a torrent of words that fanned the anger of the audience into a flame" mixed his metaphors. A torrent is a stream, and a stream cannot fan anything into a flame. The following words, supposed to have been uttered by an excited orator, are the stock illustration of this error: "I smell a rat! I see it brewing in the air! but, mark me, I will nip it in the bud!" Point out the absurdities.

VI. AFTERWORD

This section is divided into two parts: 1) the Preface of ENGLISH GRAMMAR, Revised Edition, which I've quoted in its entirety, for its further explanation of Miss Gowdy's purpose and for its local historical significance to Eastern Illinois University: reference to Mr. Thomas H. Briggs, one-time member of Eastern's English Department, who later became Head of the English Department at Columbia University; and 2) certain comments of persons who were students of Eastern Illinois Normal School in the 1920's and who learned language, composition and grammar from their teachers.

Preface

Seven years ago, when my *English Grammar* was published, there was hardly a school in the country whose course it would fit. But the convictions that English grammar is too scientific and important a subject to be garbled by inaccurate teaching in the intermediate grades, and that any rational study of it must be based upon the sentence and not the parts of speech, have evidently spread and deepened among thinking teachers during the last decade. With the change in sentiment has come a gratifying increase in the use of this grammar and a vindication of the principles for which it stands.

These principles are the result of four years' experience in teaching the subject in the schools of a small town, of later work with classes of teachers in the summer school of a state university, and of a study of Old English which gave me courage to repudiate certain commonly taught inconsistencies concerning verbs, a logical treatment of which is in harmony with the history of the language.

Use of the book with hundreds of teachers and prospective teachers in the Illinois State Normal University, careful observation of the difficulties met in the grammar grades of the Model School, and close touch through institutes and correspondence with many teachers in both large and small schools, have furnished material for the revision to which a school book should be frequently subjected.

In this revision (1) some difficulties are omitted; (2) a few definitions

are simplified; (3) the development of many subjects is given in greater detail; (4) exercises are increased and more carefully graded; (5) sentences are chosen whose content lies well within the experience of grammar grade pupils, but which, so far as the necessity of drill permits, have some literary value; and (6) simple exercises for the correction of common errors are introduced early. The book is largely inductive, not only in general plan, but in the treatment of individual topics.

As in the earlier book, Part I deals with the sentence. The student begins with the simplest sentences, those containing only the elements found in all sentences. Then element after element is added until all ordinary English constructions have been studied. The parts of speech are defined as they are needed in the building up of the sentence, but only so much of a classification is made as is based upon sentence structure.

Part II deals systematically with the more formal parts of grammar–inflection and classification. Being based upon Part I it cannot precede it.

Before passing from Chapter VI to the more detailed work of the following chapters, pupils should be able to analyze rapidly into essential elements and adjuncts ordinary sentences that do not present difficulties in the way of thought. The ability "to see through a sentence" almost unconsciously, that is, to analyze it into its main elements, is necessary to clear and correct writing and speaking as well as to intelligent reading. The exercises at the end of Chapter VI may be supplemented with passages taken from any books used by the pupils, and from compositions or other exercises written by them. From this point on, the grammar should be closely correlated with all other lines of work.

In acknowledging indebtedness for help in my grammar teaching and so in the preparation of this book, I must, as always, mention first Professor Willis M. West, at present in the University of Minnesota, but formerly Superintendent of the school in which I first taught grammar. For four years he advised, encouraged, and suggested until the order of topics was worked out. I wish also to express indebtedness to Mr. Thomas H. Briggs of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School, who has suggested a number of features which add to the usefulness of the revision. He has also read the entire manuscript, and his frank and discriminating criticism has freed it from many errors. To the hearty cooperation of my associates in the Training Department of the Illinois State Normal University, special acknowledgment is due. And to the hundreds of pupils, both in grammar grades and normal school, who have with so much good-will submitted to being practiced on, I wish to express my hearty thanks.–May, 1909

Comments

One, dated February 11, 1954, came from Ted Serviss, editor-in-chief of the Singer Publishing Co., New York City, 1954, in answer to my query about a possible publication based on my doctoral dissertation–Coordinating Modern Logic with Discourse about Grammar. I was pleased with this recollection of his early training.

"Although I don't have a copy of Gowdy's *Grammar* at hand, I recall very well having studied the book intensively a great many years ago and, in fact, if my memory serves me well, with Chestine Gowdy herself one summer. I am sure that if I have any success at all communicating with my friends, both personal and professional, it is due to a large extent to the fact that I had given me so clearly something of the structure of the language and the use to which it could be put.

I hope you go on with your study, and I hope you report in the magazines from time to time the results of teaching the course based upon your philosophy at Eastern State College. As an outgrowth of this professional work I think will come acceptance of an emphasis on a new kind of language instruction and a new means based neither upon the grammar of 1909 nor the abandonment of 1953, but on a utilization of logic as the keystone of expression. Books for students in the secondary school and in the college will follow the professional growth which you can help stimulate."

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Ted

Trevor K. Serviss

The other, also dated February 11, 1954, in response to the same query came from D. C. Heath, editor in chief of D. C. Health and Company, with offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas and London.

"I am tremendously and favorably impressed with your point of view and with the philosophy which motivated your study. I don't know whether this is because you and I had similar experiences with Gowdy's *Grammar* and with some of the fine teachers we had in our youth, but I have always had a conviction that the place of grammar in language instruction is not being settled by the insistence today that it be abandoned. What you have expressed in the material I now have on my desk is a statement which expresses one of my fundamental beliefs.

It seems to me self-evident that the secondary school and college students of the present generation have so fleeting an acquaintance with our own language that they will always be unable to express themselves adequately in written form and, to a large extent, orally. There is very little in professional literature which gives me much hope that the present situa-

tion will not continue for some time to come."

And finally, this comment written by my sister on July 25, 1990.

"High school students often find the literature of Shakespeare, Scott, Browning and their like almost impossible to understand, let alone interpret. Perhaps the reason is that these students are not able to find what is being asserted by an author, cannot even pick out the asserting word, or the subject of thought. And especially they cannot identify the structure of a sentence when that skeleton has been dressed in unfamiliar style and language.

Your work with Gowdy brought me a sudden realization of the cause of their problem. Today's students may not have been taught, carefully step-by-step, how to identify the structure of a sentence logically. Miss Gowdy caused her pupils to think as they learned. That was her secret in the teaching of grammar, I believe—structure, identification according to usage, and always, always—logic in the process.

I also noticed that passages she chose for practice in the identification of structure were themselves of literary quality and an excellent foundation for later courses in literature."

Alice E. Tolle

Research and Review Series

The Research and Review Series was established in 1988 by Eastern Illinois University to provide alumni and faculty an opportunity to publish works of research. For many years, Eastern published a bulletin series, but in 1973, it was dropped due to budgetary constraints.

This series is to be of occasional issue. It has been made possible by a donation to the Eastern Illinois University Foundation for the purpose of providing a means by which meaningful research can be published.

Emma C. (Chenault) Kelly, *Emerita* Professor of English at Eastern Illinois University, retired after thirty-six years' teaching experience in the public schools of New Jersey and Illinois, the last twenty-one of which were as a member of E.I.U's Department of English.

Miss Kelly received a Diploma in 1925 from Eastern Illinois State Teachers College (then a two-year college); an A.B. from the University of Kentucky in 1927; an M.A. from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1937; and an Ed.D. from New York University (English and Philosophy) in 1954.

She served as Supervisor and Consultant for an experimental class in the application of symbolic logic to the teaching of grammar at Newton High School, Newton, Illinois, in 1958-59.

She wrote serveral articles for professional journals and lectured to the Illinois Association of Teachers of English and at Fresno State Teachers College, Fresno, California.

Miss Kelly's long-standing admiration for the teaching methods of Chestine Gowdy and her wish to make them known to present-day teachers of English have prompted this review.

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