

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of *Grammar for Teachers: A Guide to American English for Native and Non-Native Speakers* was the result of my frustrations over many years of teaching structure courses and not being able to find an appropriate grammar text for the pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in these classes. The students in these courses represented a variety of teaching backgrounds: pre-service teachers, ESL and EFL teachers at all levels and teaching in all types of programs, native and non-native speakers of English, content-area teachers with ESL students in their classes needing additional certification or endorsement, and many others. Some of these students had a strong knowledge of English grammar but had difficulties in applying their knowledge to real-life discourse. Other students' exposure had been limited to lessons in "correctness," and they were generally unaware of which language features were central to teaching ESL/EFL learners. And for some students, this was their first course in grammar. The challenge was to find a way to convey the essentials of American English grammar clearly, to engage students actively in their own learning and understanding of grammar as applicable to ESL/EFL learners, to motivate them to undertake perceptive analyses of grammatical elements and structures, and to develop an understanding of ESL/EFL learner needs and difficulties.

Since the first edition, I have continued to teach these various populations of pre-service and in-service teachers. In using *Grammar for Teachers* over the years in my classes, I became acutely aware of many ways to substantially improve the book. In addition, many colleagues, both in the United States and overseas who were also using *Grammar for Teachers*, encouraged me to revise the text and offered numerous suggestions for improvement.

My overall aim in writing the first edition of *Grammar for Teachers* was to make grammar accessible and comprehensible, and this aim has not changed. The text encourages users to develop a solid understanding of the use and function of the grammatical structures in American English so that they may better appreciate the language difficulties of ESL/EFL learners. The underlying premise is that teachers of ESL/EFL learners need to understand how English works from a practical,

everyday approach of “What does the learner need to know in order to produce X?” When teachers understand the grammar of American English and the problems and needs of ESL/EFL learner, they are in a better position to teach and explain elements of grammar.

Like the first edition, *Grammar for Teacher* reviews essential grammar structures clearly and concisely. The text approaches grammar from a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach and focuses on the structures of grammar of greatest importance to ESL/EFL learners. *Grammar for Teachers* encourages users to tap into their own, generally subconscious, knowledge of the grammar of English and make it a conscious knowledge that they can apply to their own varied teaching settings. The text strives to make the study of grammar interesting and relevant by presenting grammar in context and by using authentic material from a variety of sources. Discussions of areas of potential difficulties for ESL/EFL learners are included throughout the text. *Grammar for Teachers* also explores differences in forms accepted in formal versus casual or informal writing and speaking.

The general design and contents of the book have not changed. In each chapter, users work through Discovery Activities that encourage them to explore for themselves different elements of grammar and to consider how these elements work together to form meaningful discourse. Additional Practical Activities at the end of each chapter provide more practice on structures presented in that chapter. Included in the Practice Activities are samples of learner errors and error analysis exercises. These exercises expose users to authentic ESL/EFL learner discourse at different levels of proficiency and from different native languages, thereby affording them opportunities to practice focusing on targeted errors.

While the design and contents remain the same, I have made substantial improvements in this second edition including: (1) rewritten and reworked material for concision and clarity throughout; (2) the use of the decimal system of numbering for section headings; (3) reorganization of content in various chapters for improved flow and more logical development; and (4) corrections of previous errors. I firmly believe that this new edition of *Grammar for Teacher* makes grammar even more accessible and comprehensible.

Specifically, new in this edition, users will find:

- updated information on current language use
- new teacher-created practice sentences
- new authentic excerpts for practice and discussion
- clearer examples throughout
- expanded discussion of the different types of adverbs
- changes in Discovery Activities to make them easier to understand and complete
- additional Discovery Activities
- reworked Answer Keys
- corrected and expanded appendices
- a new appendix of *wh*-question words

At this point, I would also like to respond to a question I increasingly encounter when I say I have written a grammar textbook for educators, namely “Why have a grammar text when we have the Internet?” Yes, it is true that there is a great deal of material available on the Internet, and, yes, the Internet is an invaluable resource. However, there are several reasons why a text such as *Grammar for Teachers* remains vital. Although the Internet provides many answers to grammar questions, it is not a comprehensive single, organized guide. Furthermore, when using a search engine, we are provided with a multitude of links to a variety of sources, not necessarily of equal quality. The grammar discussions are not always accurate or consistent, and do not provide a unified, logical approach to grammar appropriate for pre-service and in-service ESL/EFL teachers. There is also a noticeable dearth of learning activities such as the ones in the text.

I do encourage users of *Grammar for Teachers* to view the Internet as a resource to supplement the explanations of grammatical structures, examples, and discussions. Previous users will see, for instance, that in there is no longer Appendix A with a long list of irregular English verbs since such lists are readily available on the Internet. What I have retained are the patterns irregular verbs follow since this information is not as easily located.

Please note that while I realize that in many cases the terminology in the United States is changing from ESL (English as a Second Language) student to ELL (English language learner) or EL (English learner) and am aware of the issues surrounding ESL, I have chosen to retain this label because it is the most general and most widely recognized acronym globally.

Grammar for Teachers

A Guide to American English for Native and Non-Native
Speakers

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2017, XVI, 439 p., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-33914-6