

Fourth edition

A Practical English Grammar

A. J. Thomson
A. V. Martinet

Oxford University Press

Oxford University Press Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York Toronto

Delhi	Bombay	Calcutta	Madras	Karachi
Peking	Jaya	Singapore	Hong Kong	Tokyo
Nairobi	Dar es Salaam	Cape Town		
Melbourne	Auckland			

and associated companies in

Beirut	Berlin	Ibadan	Nicosia
--------	--------	--------	---------

Oxford is a trade mark of Oxford University Press.

ISBN 0 19 431342 5 (paperback)

ISBN 0 19 431347 6 (hardback)

© Oxford University Press 1960, 1969, 1980, 1986

First published 1960 (reprinted seven times)

Second edition 1969 (reprinted ten times)

Third edition 1980 (reprinted eight times)

Fourth edition 1986

Second impression 1986

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Printed in Hong Kong

Preface to the fourth edition

A Practical English Grammar is intended for intermediate and post-intermediate students. We hope that more advanced learners and teachers will also find it useful.

The book is a comprehensive survey of structures and forms, written in clear modern English and illustrated with numerous examples. Areas of particular difficulty have been given special attention. Differences between conversational usage and strict grammatical forms are shown but the emphasis is on conversational forms.

In the fourth edition the main changes are as follows:

- 1 Explanations and examples have been brought up to date.
- 2 There is now more information on countable and uncountable nouns, attributive and predicative adjectives, adverbs of place, sentence adverbs, cleft sentences, prepositions, conjunctions, modal verbs, perfect tenses, infinitive constructions, the passive purpose clauses and noun clauses.
- 3 Some material has been rearranged to make comparisons easier. For example, parts of chapters on *can*, *may*, *must* etc. are now grouped by function; verbs of liking and preference have a chapter to themselves; suggestions and invitations have joined the chapter on commands, requests and advice.
- 4 The contents list now summarises every section heading, and there is a new index containing many more entries and references.

In this edition the sign '~' is frequently used to denote a change of speaker in examples of dialogue. Note also that although the sign '=' sometimes connects two words or expressions with the same meaning, it is often used more freely, e.g. to indicate a transformation from active to passive or direct to indirect speech.

We wish to thank all at Oxford University Press who have assisted in the preparation of the fourth edition. We would also like to thank Professor Egawa of Nihon University, Japan, Professor René Dirven of Duisburg University, West Germany and other colleagues for their friendly and helpful suggestions.

London, November 1985

A.J.T., A.VM.

Contents

References are to sections, unless otherwise stated.

1 Articles and one, a little/ a few, this, that page 9

a/an (the indefinite article) 1
Use of a/an 2
Omission of a/an 3
a/an and one 4
a little/a few and little/few 5
the (the definite article) 6
Omission of the 7
Omission of the before home etc. 8

This/these, that/those 9

2 Nouns page 16

Kinds and function 10
Gender 10
Plurals 12
Uncountable nouns 13
Form of possessive case 14
Use of possessive case etc. 15
Compound nouns 16

3 Adjectives page 23

Kinds of adjectives 17
Position of adjectives 18

Order of adjectives of quality 19
Comparison 20
Constructions with comparisons 21
than/as + pronoun + auxiliary 22
the + adjective 23
Adjectives + one/ones etc. 24
many and much 25

Adjectives + infinitives 26
Adjectives + various constructions 27

4 Adverbs page 47

Kinds of adverbs 28

Form and use

Formation of adverbs with ly 29

Adverbs and adjectives with
the same form 30
Comparative and superlative 31
far, farther/farthest etc. 32
much, more, most 33
Constructions with comparisons 34

Position

Adverbs of manner 35
Adverbs of place 36
Adverbs of time 37
Adverbs of frequency 38
Order of adverbs 39
Sentence adverbs 40
Adverbs of degree 41

fairly, rather, quite, hardly etc.

fairly and rather 42
quite 43
hardly, scarcely, barely 44

Inversion of the verb
Inversion after certain adverbs 45

5 all, each, every, both, neither, either, some, any, no, none page 64

all, each, every, everyone etc. 46
both 47
all/both/each + of etc. 48
neither, either 49
some, any, no and none 50
someone, anyone, no one etc. 51
else after someone/anybody etc. 52
another, other etc. with one, some 53

6 Interrogatives: wh-? words and how? page 71

Interrogative adjectives and pronouns 54
Affirmative verb after who etc. 55
who, whom, whose, which, what 56
who, whom, which and what as objects of prepositions 57
Uses of what 58
which compared with who, what 59
Interrogative adverbs:
why, when, where, how 60
ever after who, what etc. 61

7 Possessive, personal and reflexive pronouns: my, mine, I, myself etc. page 75

Possessive adjectives and pronouns 62
Agreement and use of possessive adjectives 63
Possessive pronouns replacing possessive adjectives + nouns 64
Personal pronouns 65
Position of pronoun objects 66
Use of it 67
Indefinite pronouns 68
Use of they/them/their with, neither/either, someone etc. 69
Reflexive pronouns 70
Emphasizing pronouns 71

8 Relative pronouns and clauses page 81

Defining relative clauses 72
Relative pronouns used in defining clauses 73
Defining clauses: persons 74
Defining clauses: things 75
Cleft sentences 76
Relative clause replaced by infinitive or participle 77
Non-defining relative clauses 78
Non-defining clauses: persons 79
all, both, few, most, several etc. + of whom/which 80
Non-defining clauses: things 81
Connective relative clauses 82

Contents

what (relative pronoun) and which (connective relative) 83

Commas in relative clauses 84

whoever, whichever etc. 85

9 Prepositions page 91

Introduction 86

Alternative position 87

Omission of to and for before indirect objects 88

Use and omission of to with verbs of communication 89

Time and date: at, on, by etc. 90

Time: from, since, for etc. 91

Time: to, till/until, after, afterwards (adverb) 92

Travel and movement: from, to, at, in, by, on, into etc. 93

at in; in, into; on, onto 94

above, over, under etc. 95

Prepositions used with adjectives and participles 96

Verbs and prepositions 97

Gerunds after prepositions 98

Prepositions/adverbs 99

10 introduction to verbs page 105

Classes of verbs 100

Ordinary verbs

Principal parts 101

Active tenses 102

Negatives of tenses 103

Interrogative for questions and requests 104

Negative interrogative 105

Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliaries and modals 106

Forms and patterns 107

Use of auxiliaries in short answers, agreements etc.

In short answers 108

Agreements and disagreements 109

Question tags 110

Comment tags 111

Additions to remarks 112

11 be, have, do page 116

be as an auxiliary verb

Form and use 113

be + infinitive 114

be as an ordinary verb

be to denote existence, be + adjective 115

There is/are/was/were etc. 116

it is and there is compared 117

Have as an auxiliary verb

Form, and use 118

have + object + past participle 119

had better + bare infinitive 120

have. object + present participle 121

have as an ordinary verb

have meaning 'possess' 122

have meaning 'take', 'give' 123

do

Form 124

do used as an auxiliary 125

do used as an ordinary verb 126

12 may and can for permission and possibility page 128

Permission

may for permission: forms 127

can for permission: forms 128

may and can used for permission in the present or future 129

could or was/were allowed to for permission in the past 130

Requests for permission 131

Possibility

May/might for possibility 132

May/might + perfect infinitive 133

could or *may/might* 134

can for possibility 135

13 can and be able for ability page 134

can and be able: forms 136

Can/am able, *could/was* able 137

could + perfect infinitive 138

14 ought, should, must, have to, need for obligation page 137

ought: forms 139

should: forms 140

ought/should compared to must and have to 141

ought/should with the continuous infinitive 142

ought/should with the perfect infinitive 143

must and have to: forms 144

must and have to: difference 145

need not and must not in the present and future 146

need not, must not and must in the present and future 147

need: forms 148

Absence of obligation 149

need not and other forms 150

must, have to and need in the interrogative 151

needn't + perfect infinitive 152

Needn't have (done) and didn't have/need (to do) 153

needn't, could and should + perfect infinitive 154

to need meaning 'require' 155

Contents

15 must, have, will and should for deduction and assumption page 147

must for deduction 156

must compared to may/might 157

have/had for deduction 158

can't and couldn't used for negative deduction 159

will and should: assumption 160

16 The auxiliaries dare and used page 150

dare 161

used 162

to be/become/get used to 163

17 The present tenses page 153

The present continuous

Form 164

Present participle: spelling 165

Uses 166

Other possible uses 167

Verbs not normally used 168

feel, look, smell and taste 169

see and hear 170

think, assume and expect 171

The simple present tense

Form 172

Used for habitual action 173

Other uses 174

18 The past and perfect tenses page 161

The simple past tense Form 175

Irregular verbs: form 176

Use for past events 177

The past continuous tense

Form 178

Main uses 179

Other uses 180

Past continuous or simple past 181

The present perfect tense

Form and use 182

Use with just 183

Past actions: indefinite time 184

Actions in an incomplete period 185

Actions lasting throughout an incomplete period 186

Use with for and since 187

it is + period + since + past or perfect tense 188

Present perfect and simple past 189

The present perfect continuous tense

Form 190

Use 191

Comparison of the present perfect

simple and continuous 192

Some more examples 193

The past perfect tense

Form and use 194

In time clauses 195

In indirect speech 196

The past perfect continuous tense Form and use 197

19 The future page 180

Future forms 198

The simple present 199

Future with intention 200

will + infinitive 201

The present continuous 202

The be going to form 203

be going to used for intention 204

be going to and will + infinitive to express intention 205

be going to used for prediction 206

The future simple 207

First person will and shall 208

Uses of the future simple 209

will contrasted with want/wish/would like 210

The future continuous tense 211

The future continuous used as an ordinary continuous tense 212

The future continuous used to express future without intention 213

The future continuous and will + infinitive compared 214

Various future forms 215

The future perfect and the future perfect continuous 216

20 The sequence of tenses page 195

Subordinate clauses 217

The sequence of tenses 218

21 The conditional page 196

The conditional tenses

The present conditional tense 219

The perfect conditional tense 220

Conditional sentences

Conditional sentences type 1 221

Conditional sentences type 2 222

Conditional sentences type 3 223

will/would and should 224

if + were and inversion 225

if, even if, whether, unless, but for, otherwise etc. 226

if and in case 227

if only 228

In indirect speech 229

22 Other uses of will/would, shall/should page 206

Habits expressed by will, would 230

should/would think + that-clause or so/not 231

would for past intention 232

shall I/we? 233

shall: second and third persons 234

that...should 235

it is/was + adjective + that... should 236

Other uses of should 237

Contents

23 The infinitive page 212

Form 238
Uses of the infinitive 239
The infinitive as subject 240
As object or complement 241
Verb + how/what etc. + infinitive 242
Infinitive after verb or verb + object 243
Infinitive after verb + • object 244
Infinitive after verbs of knowing and thinking etc. 245
The bare infinitive 246
Infinitive represented by to 247
Split infinitives 248
Infinitive as connective link 249
Infinitive used to replace a relative clause 250
Infinitive after certain nouns 251
After too, enough, so... as 252
Infinitive phrases 253
The continuous infinitive 254
The perfect infinitive 255
Perfect infinitive continuous 256

24 The gerund page 228

Form and use 257
The gerund as subject 258
Gerunds after prepositions 259
The word to 260
Verbs followed by the gerund 261
Verbs + possessive adjective/pronoun object + gerund 262
The verb mind 263
The perfect gerund 264
The passive gerund 265

25 Infinitive and gerund constructions page 234

Verbs + infinitive or gerund 266
Verbs + infinitive or gerund without change of meaning 267
regret, remember, forget 268
agree/agree to, mean, propose 269
go on, stop, try, used (to) 270
be afraid (of), be sorry (for) be ashamed (of) 271

26 The participles page 239

Present (or active) participle 272
After verbs of sensation 273
catch, find, leave + object + present participle 274
go, come, spend, waste etc. 275
A present participle phrase replacing a main clause 276
A present participle phrase replacing a subordinate clause 277
Perfect participle (active) 278
Part participle (passive) and perfect participle (passive) 279
Misrelated participles 280

27 Commands, requests, invitations, advice, suggestions page 245

The imperative for commands 281
Other ways of expressing commands 282
Requests with **can/could/may/might I/we** 283
Requests with could/will/would you etc. 284
Requests with might 285
Invitations 286
Advice forms 287
Advice with **may/might** as **well** + infinitive 288
Suggestions 289

28 The subjunctive page 253

Form 290
Use of the present subjunctive 291
as if etc. + past subjunctive 292
it is time + past subjunctive 293

29 care, like, love, hate, prefer, wish page 255

care and like 294
care, like, love, hate, prefer 295
would like and want 296
would rather/sooner and prefer/would prefer 297
More examples of preference 298
wish, want and **would like** 299
wish + subject + unreal past 300
wish (**that**) + subject + **would** 301

30 The passive voice page 263

Form 302
Active and passive equivalents 303
Uses of the passive 304
Prepositions with passive verbs 305
Infinitive constructions after passive verbs 306

31 Indirect speech page 269

Direct and indirect speech 307
Statements in indirect speech:
tense changes necessary 308
Past tenses 309
Unreal past tenses 310
might, ought to, should, would, used to in indirect statements 311
could in indirect statements 312
Pronoun and adjective 313
Expressions of time and place 314
Infinitive and gerund 315
say, tell, etc. 316
Questions in indirect speech 317
Questions beginning shall I/we? 318
Questions beginning **will you/would you/could you?** 319
Commands, requests, advice 320
Other ways of expressing indirect commands 321
let's, let us, let him/them 322
Exclamations and **yes** and **no** 323
Indirect speech: mixed types 324

Contents

must and needn't 325

32 Conjunctions *page 288*

Co-ordinating conjunctions 326

besides, so, still, yet etc. 327

Subordinating conjunctions 328

though/although, in spite of, despite 329

for and because 330

when, while, as to express time 331

as meaning **when/while** or **because/since** 332

as, when, while used to mean **although, but, seeing that** 333

33 Purpose *page 294*

Purpose expressed by infinitive 334

Infinitives after **go** and **come** 335

Clauses of purpose 336

in case and **lest** 337

34 Clauses of reason, result, concession, comparison, time *page 298*

Reason and result/cause 338

Result with **such/so ... that** 339

Clauses of concession 340

Clauses of comparison 341

Time clauses 342

35 Noun clauses *page 303*

Noun clauses as subject 343

that-clauses after certain adjectives/participles 344

that-clauses after nouns 345

Noun clauses as objects 346

so and **not** representing a that-clause 347

36 Numerals, dates, and weights and measures *page 307*

Cardinal numbers 348

Points about cardinal numbers 349

Ordinal numbers 350

Points about ordinal numbers 351

Dates 352

Weights, length, liquids 353

37 Spelling rules *page 311*

Introduction 354

Doubling the consonant 355

Omission of a final **e** 356

Words ending in **ce** and **ge** 357

The suffix **ful** 358

Words ending in **y** 359

ie and **ei** 360

Hyphens 361

38 Phrasal verbs *page 315*

Introduction 362

Verb + preposition/adverb 363

39 List of irregular verbs *page 353*

Irregular verbs 364 Index *page 359*

1 Articles and **one, a little/a few, this, that**

1 **a/an** (the indefinite article)

The form **a** is used before a word beginning with a consonant, or a vowel with a consonant sound:

a man *a had* *a university* *a European*
a one-way street

The form **an** is used before words beginning with a vowel (**a, e, i, o, u**) or words beginning with a mute **h**:

an apple *an island* *an uncle*
an egg *an onion* *an hour*

or individual letters spoken with a vowel sound:

an L-plate *an MP* *an SOS* *an 'x'*

a/an is the same for all genders:

a man *a woman* *an actor* *an actress* *a table*

2 Use of **a/an**

a/an is used:

A Before a singular noun which is countable (i.e. of which there is more than one) when it is mentioned for the first time and represents no particular person or thing:
I need a visa. They live in a flat. He bought an ice-cream.

B Before a singular countable noun which is used as an example of a class of things:
A car must be insured
All cars/Any car must be insured.
A child needs love
All children need/Any child needs love.

C With a noun complement. This includes names of professions:
It was an earthquake. She'll be a dancer. He is an actor.

D In certain expressions of quantity:
a lot of *a couple*
a great many *a dozen* (but *one dozen* is also possible)
a great deal of

E With certain numbers:
a hundred a thousand (See 349.)
Before **half** when **half** follows a whole number;
1 ½ kilos = one and a half kilos or *a kilo and a half*
But *½ kg = half a kilo* (no **a** before *half*), though *a + half + noun* is sometimes possible:
a half-holiday a half-portion a half-share
With *1/3, ¼, 1/5* etc. **a** is usual: *a third, a quarter* etc., but **one** is also possible. (See 350.)

F In expressions of price, speed, ratio, etc.:
5p a kilo *£1 a metre* *sixty kilometres an hour*
10 p a dozen *four times a day*
(Here **a/an** = **per**)

G In exclamations before singular, countable nouns:
Such a long queue! *What a pretty girl!* But
Such long queues! *What pretty girls!*
(Plural nouns, so no article. See 3.)

H **a** can be placed before Mr/Mrs/Miss + surname:
a Mr Smith a Mrs Smith a Miss Smith a Mr Smith

means 'a man called Smith' and implies that he is a stranger to the speaker. *Mr Smith*, without *a*, implies that the speaker knows Mr Smith or knows of his existence.
(For the difference between **a/an** and **one**, see 4. For **a few** and **a little**, see 5.)

3 Omission of **a/an**

- a/an** is omitted;
- A Before plural nouns.
a/an has no plural form. So the plural of *a dog* is *dogs*, and of *an egg* is *eggs*.
- B Before uncountable nouns (see 13).
- C Before names of meals, except when these are preceded by an adjective:
We have breakfast at eight.
He gave us a good breakfast.
- The article is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate something or in someone's honour:
I was invited to dinner (at their house, in the ordinary way) but
I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.

4 **a/an** and **one**

A **a/an** and **one** (adjective)

- 1 When counting or measuring time, distance, weight etc. we can use either **a/an** or **one** for the singular:
£1 = a/one pound £1,000,000 = a/one million pounds (See chapter 36.)
But note that in *The rent is £100 a week* the **a** before *week* is not replaceable by **one** (see 2 F).
In other types of statement **a/an** and **one** are **not** normally interchangeable, because **one** + noun normally means 'one only/not more than one' and **a/an** does not mean this:
A shotgun is no good. (It is the wrong sort of thing.)
One shotgun is no good. (I need two or three.)
- 2 Special uses of **one**
- (a) **one** (adjective/pronoun) used with **another/others**:
One (boy) wanted to read, another /others wanted to watch TV.
(See 53.)
One day he wanted his lunch early, another day he wanted it late.
- (b) **one** can be used before *day/week/month/year/summer/winter* etc. or before the name of the day or month to denote a particular time when something happened:
One night there was a terrible storm.
One winter the snow fell early.
One day a telegram arrived.
- (c) **one day** can also be used to mean 'at some future date':
One day you'll be sorry you treated him so badly.
(*Some day* would also be possible.)
(For **one** and **you**, see 68.)

B **a/an** and **one** (pronoun)

one is the pronoun equivalent of **a/an**:
Did you get a ticket? ~ Yes, I managed to get one.
The plural of **one** used in this way is **some**:
Did you get tickets? ~ Yes, I managed to get some.

5 **a little/a few** and **little/few**

- A **a little/little** (adjectives) are used before uncountable nouns:
a little salt/little salt
- a few/few** (adjectives) are used before plural nouns:
a few people/few people
- All four forms can also be used as pronouns, either alone or with *of*:
Sugar? ~ A little, please.
Only a few of these are any good.

- B a little, a few** (adjectives and pronouns)
a little is a small amount, or what the speaker considers a small amount, **a few** is a small number, or what the speaker considers a small number.
only placed before **a little/a few** emphasises that the number or amount really is small in the speaker's opinion:
Only a few of our customers have accounts.
 But **quite** placed before **a few** increases the number considerably:
I have quite a few books on art. (quite a lot of books)

- C little and few** (adjectives and pronouns)
little and **few** denote scarcity or lack and have almost the force of a negative:
There was little time for consultation.
 Little is known about the side-effects of this drug.
Few towns have such splendid trees.
 This use of **little** and **few** is mainly confined to written English (probably because in conversation **little** and **few** might easily be mistaken for **a little/a few**). In conversation, therefore, **little** and **few** are normally replaced by **hardly any**. A negative verb + **much/many** is also possible:
We saw little = We saw hardly anything/We didn't see much.
Tourists come here but few stay overnight =
Tourists come here but hardly any stay overnight.
 But **little** and **few** can be used more freely when they are qualified by *so, very, too, extremely, comparatively, relatively etc.* **fewer** (comparative) can also be used more freely.
I'm unwilling to try a drug I know so little about.
They have too many technicians, we have too few.
There are fewer butterflies every year.

- D a little/little** (adverbs)
1 a little can be used:
 (a) with verbs: *It rained a little during the night.*
They grumbled a little about having to wait.
 (b) with 'unfavourable' adjectives and adverbs:
a little anxious a little unwillingly
a little annoyed a little impatiently
 (c) with comparative adjectives or adverbs:
The paper should be a little thicker.
Can't you walk a little faster?
rather could replace **a little** in (b) and can also be used before comparatives (see 42), though **a little** is more usual. In colloquial English **a bit** could be used instead of **a little** in all the above examples.
2 little is used chiefly with **better** or **more** in fairly formal style:
His second suggestion was little (= not much) better than his first.
He was little (= not much) more than a child when his father died.
 It can also, in formal English, be placed before certain verbs, for example *expect, know, suspect, think*:
He little expected to find himself in prison.
He little thought that one day . . .
 Note also the adjectives *little-known* and *little-used*:
a little-known painter a little-used footpath

6 **the** (the definite article)

- A Form**
the is the same for singular and plural and for all genders:
the boy the girl the day
the boys the girls the days
- B Use**
 The definite article is used:
1 When the object or group of objects is unique or considered to be unique:
the earth the sea the sky the equator the stars

- 2 Before a noun which has become definite as a result of being mentioned a second time:
His car struck a tree; you can still see the mark on the tree.
- 3 Before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause:
the girl in blue the man with the banner
the boy that I met the place where I met him
- 4 Before a noun which by reason of locality can represent only one particular thing:
Ann is in the garden, (the garden of this house)
Please pass the wine, (the wine on the table)
Similarly: *the postman* (the one who comes to us), *the car* (our car), *the newspaper* (the one we read).
- 5 Before superlatives and *first, second* etc. used as adjectives or pronouns, and only:
the first (week) the best day the only way
- C **the** + singular noun can represent a class of animals or things:
The whale is in danger of becoming extinct.
The deep-freeze has made life easier for housewives.
But *man*, used to represent the human race, has no article:
If oil supplies run out, man may have to fall back on the horse.
the can be used before a member of a certain group of people:
The small shopkeeper is finding life increasingly difficult.
the + singular noun as used above takes a singular verb. The pronoun is **he, she** or **it**:
The first-class traveller pays more so he expects some comfort.
- D **the** + adjective represents a class of persons:
the old = old people in general (see 23)
- E **the** is used before certain proper names of seas, rivers, groups of islands, chains of mountains, plural names of countries, deserts, regions:
the Atlantic the Netherlands
the Thames the Sahara
the Azores the Crimea
the Alps the Riviera
and before certain other names:
the City the Mall the Sudan
the Hague the Strand the Yemen
the is also used before names consisting of noun + **of** + noun:
the Bay of Biscay the Gulf of Mexico
the Cape of Good Hope the United States of America
the is used before names consisting of adjective + noun (provided the adjective is not *east, west* etc.):
the Arabian Gulf the New Forest the High Street
the is used before the adjectives *east/west* etc. + noun in certain names:
the East/West End the East/West Indies
the North/South Pole
but is normally omitted:
South Africa North America West Germany
the, however, is used before *east/west* etc. when these are nouns:
the north of Spain the West (geographical)
the Middle East the West (political)
Compare *Go north* (adverb: in a northerly direction) with *He lives in the north* (noun: an area in the north).
- F **the** is used before other proper names consisting of adjective + noun or noun + **of** + noun:
the National Gallery the Tower of London
It is also used before names of choirs, orchestras, pop groups etc.:
the Bach Choir the Philadelphia Orchestra the Beatles
and before names of newspapers (*The Times*) and ships (*the Great Britain*).

- G **the** with names of people has a very limited use. **the** + plural surname can be used to mean 'the . . . family':
the Smiths = Mr and Mrs Smith (and children)
the + singular name + clause/phrase can be used to distinguish one person from another of the same name:
We have two Mr Smiths. Which do you want? ~ I want the Mr Smith who signed this letter.
the is used before titles containing **of** (*the Duke of York*) but it is not used before other titles or ranks (*Lord Olivier, Captain Cook*), though if someone is referred to by title/rank alone **the** is used:
The earl expected . . . The captain ordered . . .
 Letters written to two or more unmarried sisters jointly may be addressed *The Misses* + surname: *The Misses Smith*.

7 Omission of **the**

- A The definite article is not used:
- Before names of places except as shown above, or before names of people.
 - Before abstract nouns except when they are used in a particular sense;
Men fear death but *The death a/the Prime Minister left his party without a leader.*
 - After a noun in the possessive case, or a possessive adjective:
the boy's uncle = the uncle of the boy *It is my (blue) book = The (blue) book is mine.*
 - Before names of meals (but see 3 C):
The Scots have porridge/or breakfast but *The wedding breakfast was held in her/other's house.*
 - Before names of games: *He plays golf.*
 - Before parts of the body and articles of clothing, as these normally prefer a possessive adjective:
Raise your right hand. fie took off his coat.
 But notice that sentences of the type:
She seized the child's collar.
I patted his shoulder.
The brick hit John's face.
 could be expressed:
She seized the child by the collar.
I patted him on the shoulder.
The brick hit John in the face.
 Similarly in the passive:
He was hit on the head. He was cut in the hand.
- B Note that in some European languages the definite article is used before indefinite plural nouns but that in English **the** is never used in this way:
Women are expected to like babies, (i.e. women in general)
Big hotels all over the world are very much the same.
 If we put **the** before *women* in the first example, it would mean that we were referring to a particular group of women.
- C *nature*, where it means the spirit creating and motivating the world of plants and animals etc., is used without **the**:
If you interfere with nature you will suffer for it.

8 Omission of **the** before **home**, before **church, hospital, prison, school** etc. and before **work, sea and town**

- A **home**
 When *home* is used alone, i.e. is not preceded or followed by a descriptive word or phrase, **the** is omitted:
He is at home.
home used alone can be placed directly after a verb of motion, i.e. it can be treated as an adverb:

He went home. I arrived home after dark.

But when *home* is preceded or followed by a descriptive word or phrase it is treated like any other noun:

They went to their new home.

We arrived at the bride's home.

For some years this was the home of your queen.

A mud hut was the only home he had ever known.

- B** **bed, church, court, hospital, prison, school/college/university**
the is not used before the nouns listed above when these places are visited or used for their primary purpose. We go:

to bed to sleep or as invalids *to hospital* as patients

to church to pray *to prison* as prisoners

to court as litigants etc. *to school/college/university* to study

Similarly we can be:

in bed, sleeping or resting *in hospital* as patients

at church as worshippers *at school* etc. as students

in court as witnesses etc.

We can be/get back (or be/get home) *from school/college/university*.

We can leave school, leave hospital, *be released* from prison.

When these places are visited or used for other reasons **the** is necessary:

I went to the church to see the stained glass.

He goes to the prison sometimes to give lectures.

- C** **sea**

We go to *sea* as sailors. To be *at sea* = to be on a voyage (as passengers or crew).

But to go *to* or be *at the sea* = to go to or be *at the seaside*. We can also live *by/near the sea*.

- D** **work and office**

work (= place of work) **is** used without **the**:

He's on his way to work. He is at work.

He isn't back from work yet.

Note that *at work* can also mean 'working'; *hard at work* = working hard:

He's hard at work on a new picture.

office (= place of work) needs **the**: *He is at/in the office.*

To be *in office* (without **the**) means to hold an official (usually political) position. To be *out of office* = to be no longer in power.

- E** **town**

the can be omitted when speaking of the subject's or speaker's own town:

We go to town sometimes to buy clothes.

We were in town last Monday.

9 **this/these, that/those** (demonstrative adjectives and pronouns)

- A** Used as adjectives, they agree with their nouns in number. They are the only adjectives to do this.

This beach was quite empty last year.

This exhibition will be open until the end of May.

These people come from that hotel over there.

What does that notice say?

That exhibition closed a month ago.

He was dismissed on the 13th. That night the factory went on fire.

Do you see those birds at the top of the tree?

this/these/that/those + noun + *of yours/hers etc. or Ann's etc.* is sometimes, for emphasis, used instead of *your/her etc. + noun*:

This diet of mine/My diet isn't having much effect.

That car of Ann's/Ann's car is always breaking down.

Remarks made with these phrases are usually, though not necessarily always, unfavourable,

- B** **this/these, that/those** used as pronouns:

This is my umbrella. That's yours.

These are the old classrooms. Those are the new ones.

Who's that (man over there)? ~ That's Tom Jones.

After a radio programme:

That was the concerto in C minor by Vivaldi.

this is is possible in introductions:

ANN (to TOM): *This is my brother Hugh.*

ANN (to HUGH): *Hugh, this is Tom Jones.*

TELEPHONE CALLER: *Good morning. This is/I am Tom Jones . . .*

I am is slightly more formal than *This is* and is more likely to be used when the caller is a stranger to the other person. The caller's name + *here* (*Tom here*) is more informal than *This is*. **those** can be followed by a defining relative clause:

Those who couldn't walk were carried on stretchers.

this/that can represent a previously mentioned noun, phrase or clause:

They're digging up my mad. They do this every summer.

He said I wasn't a good wife. Wasn't that a horrible thing to say?

C this/these, that/those used with one/ones

When there is some idea of comparison or selection, the pronoun **one/ones** is often placed after these demonstratives, but it is not essential except when **this** etc. is followed by an adjective:

This chair is too low. I'll sit in that (one).

I like this (one) best.

I like this blue one/these blue ones.

2 Nouns

10 Kinds and function

- A There are four kinds of noun in English:
Common nouns: *dog, man, table*
Proper nouns: *France, Madrid, Mrs Smith, Tom*
Abstract nouns: *beauty, chanty, courage, fear, joy*
Collective nouns: *crowd, flock, group, swarm, team*
- B A noun can function as:
The subject of a verb: *Tom arrived.*
The complement of the verbs **be, become, seem**: *Tom is an actor.*
The object of a verb: *I saw Tom.*
The object of a preposition: *I spoke to Tom.*
A noun can also be in the possessive case: *Tom's books.*

11 Gender

- A Masculine: men, boys and male animals (pronoun **he/they**).
Feminine: women, girls and female animals (pronoun **she/they**).
Neuter: inanimate things, animals whose sex we don't know and sometimes babies whose sex we don't know (pronoun **it/they**).
Exceptions: ships and sometimes cars and other vehicles when regarded with affection or respect are considered feminine. Countries when referred to by name are also normally considered feminine.

The ship struck an iceberg, which tore a huge hole in her side.
Scotland lost many of her bravest men in two great rebellions.

- B Masculine/feminine nouns denoting people

1 Different forms;

(a) <i>boy, girl</i>	<i>gentleman, lady</i>	<i>son, daughter</i>
<i>bachelor, spinster</i>	<i>husband, wife</i>	<i>uncle, aunt</i>
<i>bridegroom, bride</i>	<i>man, woman</i>	<i>widower, widow</i>
<i>father, mother</i>	<i>nephew, niece</i>	

Main exceptions:

<i>baby</i>	<i>infant</i>	<i>relative</i>
<i>child</i>	<i>parent</i>	<i>spouse</i>
<i>cousin</i>	<i>relation</i>	<i>teenager</i>
(b) <i>duke, duchess</i>	<i>king, queen</i>	<i>prince, princess</i>
<i>earl, countess</i>	<i>lord, lady</i>	

2 The majority of nouns indicating occupation have the same form:

<i>artist</i>	<i>cook</i>	<i>driver</i>	<i>guide</i>
<i>assistant</i>	<i>dancer</i>	<i>doctor</i>	<i>etc.</i>

Main exceptions:

<i>actor, actress</i>	<i>host, hostess</i>
<i>conductor, conductress</i>	<i>manager, manageress</i>
<i>heir, Heiress</i>	<i>steward, stewardess</i>
<i>hero, heroine</i>	<i>waiter, waitress</i>

Also *salesman, saleswoman* etc., but sometimes *-person* is used instead of *-man, -woman*:
salesperson, spokesperson.

- C Domestic animals and many of the larger wild animals have different forms:

<i>bull, cow</i>	<i>duck, drake</i>	<i>ram, ewe</i>	<i>stallion, mare</i>
<i>cock, hen</i>	<i>gander, goose</i>	<i>stag, doe</i>	<i>tiger, tigress</i>
<i>dog, bitch</i>	<i>lion, lioness</i>		

Others have the same form.

12 Plurals

- A The plural of a noun is usually made by adding s to the singular:
day, days dog, dogs house, houses
s is pronounced /s/ after **a p, k or f** sound. Otherwise it is pronounced /z/.
When s is placed after **ce, ge, se** or **ze** an extra syllable (/iz/) is added to the spoken word.
Other plural forms
- B Nouns ending in o or **ch, sh, ss** or **x** form their plural by adding **es**:
tomato, tomatoes brush, brushes box, boxes
church, churches kiss, kisses
But words of foreign origin or abbreviated words ending in o add s only:
dynamo, dynamos kimono, kimonos piano, pianos
kilo, kilos photo, photos soprano, sopranos
When es is placed after **ch, sh, ss** or **x** an extra syllable (/iz/) is added to the spoken word.
- C Nouns ending in y following a consonant form their plural by dropping the y and adding **ies**:
baby, babies country, countries fly, flies lady, ladies
Nouns ending in y following a vowel form their plural by adding s:
boy, boys day, days donkey, donkeys guy, guys
- D Twelve nouns ending in **f** or **fe** drop the **f** or **fe** and add **ves**. These nouns are *calf, half, knife, leaf, life, loaf, self, sheaf, shelf, thief, wife, wolf*:
loaf, loaves wife, wives wolf, wolves etc.
The nouns *hoof, scar/and wharf* take either **s** or **ves** in the plural:
hoofs or hooves scarfs or scarves wharfs or wharves
Other words ending in **f** or **fe** add **s** in the ordinary way:
cliff, cliffs handkerchief, handkerchiefs safe, safes
- E A few nouns form their plural by a vowel change:
foot, feet louse, lice mouse, mice woman, women
goose, geese man, men tooth, teeth
The plurals of *child* and *ox* are *children, oxen*.
- F Names of certain creatures do not change in the plural.
fish is normally unchanged, *fishes* exists but is uncommon. Some types of fish do not normally change in the plural:
carp pike salmon trout
cod plaice squid turbot
mackerel
but if used in a plural sense they would take a plural verb. Others add s:
crabs herrings sardines
eels lobsters sharks
deer and *sheep* do not change: *one sheep, two sheep*.
Sportsmen who shoot *duck, partridge, pheasant* etc. use the same form for singular and plural. But other people normally add **s** for the plural: *ducks, partridges, pheasants*.
The word *game*, used by sportsmen to mean an animal/animals hunted, is always in the singular, and takes a singular verb.
- G A few other words don't change:
aircraft, craft (boat/boats) *quid* (slang for £1)
counsel (barristers working in court)
Some measurements and numbers do not change (see chapter 36).
For uncountable nouns, see 13.
- H Collective nouns, *crew, family, team* etc., can take a singular or plural verb; singular if we consider the word to mean a single group or unit:
Our team is the best
or plural if we take it to mean a number of individuals:
Our team are wearing their new jerseys.
When a possessive adjective is necessary, a plural verb with **their** is more usual than a singular verb with **its**, though sometimes both are possible:
The Jury is considering its verdict.

The jury are considering their verdict.

- I Certain words are always plural and take a plural verb:
Clothes police
 garments consisting of two parts:
breeches pants pyjama trousers etc.
 and tools and instruments consisting of two parts:
binoculars pliers scissors spectacles
glasses scales shears etc.
 Also certain other words including:
arms (weapons) particulars
damages (compensation) premises/quarters
earnings riches
goods/wares savings
greens (vegetables) spirits (alcohol)
grounds stairs
outskirts surroundings
pains (trouble/effort) valuables
- J A number words ending in **ics**, *acoustics, athletics, ethics, hysterics, mathematics, physics, politics* etc., which are plural in form, normally take a plural verb:
His mathematics are weak.
 But names of sciences can sometimes be considered singular:
Mathematics is an exact science.
- K Words plural in form but singular in meaning include *news*:
The news is good
 certain diseases:
mumps rickets shingles
 and certain games:
billiards darts draughts bowls dominoes
- L Some words which retain their original Greek or Latin forms make their plurals according to the rules of Greek and Latin:
crisis, crises phenomenon, phenomena
erratum, errata radius, radii
memorandum, memoranda terminus, termini
oasis, oases
 But some follow the English rules:
dogma, dogmas gymnasium, gymnasiums
formula, formulas (though *formulae* is used by scientists)
 Sometimes there are two plural forms with different meanings:
appendix, appendixes or appendices (medical terms)
appendix, appendices (addition/s to a book)
index, indexes (in books), *indices* (in mathematics)
 Musicians usually prefer Italian plural forms for Italian musical terms:
libretto, libretti tempo, tempi
 But s is also possible: *librettos, tempos.*
- M Compound nouns
- 1 Normally the last word is made plural:
boy-friends break-ins travel agents
 But where *man* and *woman* is prefixed both parts are made plural:
men drivers women drivers
- 2 The first word is made plural with compounds formed of verb + **er** nouns + adverbs:
hangers-on lookers-on runners-up
 and with compounds composed of noun + preposition + noun:
ladies-in-waiting sisters-in-law wards of court
- 3 Initials can be made plural:
MPs (Members of Parliament)
VIPs (very important persons)
OAPs (old age pensioners)
UFOs (unidentified flying objects)

13 Uncountable nouns (also known as non-count nouns or mass nouns)

A 1 Names of substances considered generally:

bread	cream	gold	paper	tea
beer	dust	ice	sand	wafer
cloth	gin	jam	soap	wine
coffee	glass	oil	stone	wood

2 Abstract nouns:

advice	experience	horror	pity
beauty	fear	information	relief
courage	help	knowledge	suspicion
death	hope	mercy	work

3 Also considered uncountable in English:

baggage damage luggage shopping
camping furniture parking weather

These, with hair, information, knowledge, news, rubbish, are sometimes countable in other languages.

B Uncountable nouns are always singular and are not used with **a/an**:

I don't want (any) advice or help. I want (some) information.

He has had no experience in this sort of work.

These nouns are often preceded by **some, any, no, a little** etc. or by nouns such as bit, piece, slice etc. + **of**:

a bit of news	a grain of sand	a pot of jam
a cake of soap	a pane of glass	a sheet of paper
a drop of oil	a piece of advice	

C Many of the nouns in the above groups can be used in a particular sense and are then countable and can take **a/an** in the singular. Some examples are given below.

hair (all the hair on one's head) is considered uncountable, but if we consider each hair separately we say one hair, two hairs etc.:

Her hair is black. Whenever she finds a grey hair she pulls it out.

We drink beer, coffee, gin, but we can ask for a (cup of) coffee, a gin, two gins etc. We drink out of glasses. We can walk in woods.

experience meaning 'something which happened to someone' is countable:

He had an exciting experience/some exciting experiences
(= adventure/s) last week.

work meaning 'occupation/employment/a job/jobs' is singular:

He is looking/or work/for a job. I do homework.
She does housework.

But roadworks means 'repair of roads'.

works (plural only) can mean 'factory' or 'moving parts of a machine'.

works (usually plural) can be used of literary or musical compositions:

Shakespeare's complete works.

D Some abstract nouns can be used in a particular sense with **a/an**, but in the singular only:

a help:

My children are a great help to me. A good map would be a help.

a relief:

It was a relief to sit down.

a knowledge + of:

He had a good knowledge of mathematics.

a dislike/dread/hatred/horror/love + of is also possible:

a love of music a hatred of violence

a mercy/pity/shame/wonder can be used with **that**-clauses introduced by **it**:

It's a pity you weren't here. It's a shame he wasn't paid.

E **a fear/fears, a hope/hopes, a suspicion/suspensions**

These can be used with **that**-clauses introduced by **there**:

There is a fear/There are fears that he has been murdered.

We can also have a suspicion that. . .

Something can arouse a *fear/fears*, a *hope/hopes*, a *suspicion/suspicions*.

14 The form of the possessive/genitive case

A 's is used with singular nouns and plural nouns not ending in s:

<i>a man's job</i>	<i>the people's choice</i>
<i>men's work</i>	<i>the crew's quarters</i>
<i>a woman's intuition</i>	<i>the horse's mouth</i>
<i>the butcher's (shop)</i>	<i>the bull's horns</i>
<i>a child's voice</i>	<i>women's clothes</i>
<i>the children's room</i>	<i>Russia's exports</i>

B A simple apostrophe (') is used with plural nouns ending in s:

<i>a girls' school</i>	<i>the students' hostel</i>
<i>the eagles' nest</i>	<i>the Smiths' car</i>

C Classical names ending in s usually add only the apostrophe:

<i>Pythagoras' Theorem</i>	<i>Archimedes' Law</i>	<i>Sophocles' plays</i>
----------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------

D Other names ending in s can take 's or the apostrophe alone;

<i>Mr Jones's (w Mr Jones' house)</i>	<i>Yeats's (or Yeats') poems</i>
---------------------------------------	----------------------------------

E With compounds, the last word takes the 's:

my brother-in-law's guitar

Names consisting of several words are treated similarly:

Henry the Eighth's wives *the Prince of Wales's helicopter*

's can also be used after initials:

the PM's secretary *the MP's briefcase* *the VIP's escort*

Note that when the possessive case is used, the article before the person or thing 'possessed' disappears:

<i>the daughter of the politician</i>	=	<i>the politician's daughter</i>
<i>the intervention of America</i>	=	<i>America's intervention</i>
<i>the plays of Shakespeare</i>	=	<i>Shakespeare's plays</i>

15 Use of the possessive/genitive case and of + noun

A The possessive case is chiefly used of people, countries or animals as shown above- It can also be used:

1 Of ships and boats: *the ship's bell*. *the yacht's mast*

2 Of planes, trains, cars and other vehicles, though here the **of** construction is safer:
a glider's wings or *the wings of a glider* *the train's heating system* or *the heating system of the train*

3 In time expressions:

<i>a week's holiday</i>	<i>today's paper</i>	<i>tomorrow's weather</i>
<i>in two years' time</i>	<i>ten minutes' break</i>	<i>two hours' delay</i>

a ten-minute break, a two-hour delay are also possible:

We have ten minutes' break/a ten-minute break.

4 In expressions of money + **worth**:

<i>£1 's worth of stamps</i>	<i>ten dollars' worth of ice-cream</i>
------------------------------	--

5 With **for** + noun + **sake**: *for heaven's sake*, *for goodness' sake*

6 In a few expressions such as:

<i>a stone's throw</i>	<i>Journey's end</i>	<i>the water's edge</i>
------------------------	----------------------	-------------------------

7 We can say either a winter's day or a winter day and a summer's day or a summer day, but we cannot make spring or autumn possessive, except when they are personified: Autumn's return.

8 Sometimes certain nouns can be used in the possessive case without the second noun. a/the baker's/butcher's/chemist's/florist's etc. can mean 'a/the baker's/butcher's etc. shop'. Similarly, a/the house agent's/travel agent's etc. (office) and the dentist 's/doctor 's/vet 's (surgery):

You can buy it at the chemist's. *He's going to the dentist's.*

Names of the owners of some businesses can be used similarly:

Sotheby's, Claridge's

Some very well-known shops etc. call themselves by the possessive form and some drop the apostrophe: *Foyles, Harrods*.

Names of people can sometimes be used similarly to mean '... 's house':

We had lunch at Bill's. *We met at Ann's.*

B **of** + noun is used for possession: