

CHAPTER ONE **Introduction**

On the writing of grammars there is no end. . . . There have been short grammars and complete grammars, practical grammars and philosophical grammars, new grammars and improved grammars, descriptive grammars and structural grammars, grammars without tears and grammars for heretics, logical grammars and grammars on historical principles, and even Grammar on English Grammars.

Robert L. Allen (1972, p. xiii)

THE PREMISE OF THIS BOOK

The premise of *English Grammar Instruction That Works! Developing Language Skills for all Learners* is that there is an important place for grammar (defined later) in students' lives and learning. Grammar is integral to language and provides us with the ability to speak, read, write, appreciate humor, express emotions, and have a shared backdrop with others that provides closeness and understanding. Students with a strong knowledge of language, including grammar, enjoy expanded learning opportunities in all disciplines, including a better understanding of themselves. They develop insights about thinking and bringing thought to vocal and written expression. They are better equipped to say what they mean and understand what others mean. Since there is virtually no end to the amount of language that we can learn, students of language develop a passion for all learning and never get a signal that says "Hard drive full!"

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GRAMMAR?

School grammar books have traditionally taught that grammar is to learn the "correct rules" of a language, mostly for writing. They include topics such as usage, sentence structure, punctuation, parts of speech, and possibly other features that are related to school purposes such as improved reading comprehension and development of presentation skills (Crystal, 2006a).

Introduction

*Language and
Metalanguage*

*Builders of
Linguistic
Intelligence*

***Parts of
Speech and the
English Language***

*Syntax and
Semantics*

*The Polyglot
of English*

*The Polyglot:
Beyond Latin
and Greek*

*Return to Parts
of Speech*

*Sentences,
Paragraphs, and
Other Structures
of the Written
Language*

*Grammar for
Word Play*

*Reading, Writing,
and Grammar*

*Punctuation,
Spelling, Text
Messaging, and
Other
Consequences of
Grammar*

*Additional
Learning
Activities*

CHAPTER FOUR

*P*arts of Speech and the English Language

*A noun's the name of any thing:
A school, a garden, hoop, or swing.
Verbs tell of something being done:
To read, count, sing, laugh, jump, or run.*

(Pinker, 1994, p. 97)

*They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs: they're the
proudest—adjectives, you can do anything with, but not verbs—
Humpty Dumpty in Through the Looking Glass.*

(Carroll, 1872/1995b, p. 94)

Defining a language by its “parts” is always risky, since language, by definition, is a system for getting meaning that is always more than the sum of its parts. We understand our native language not because we necessarily know much *about* it, but because we just *know it!* So with this warning, we begin on parts of speech, a topic deeply embedded in our school culture and curriculum.

Figure 8.13 Use the Modal Verbs *Can/Could, Shall/Should, Will/Would, May/Might*, Plus *Need* and *Dare*

You probably use these words dozens of times each day in your speech without ever having to think about how or why you are using them. They are just a common part of everyday English. However, these words, which are a special kind of verb called *modal* verbs, express the following:

1. Being possible or not possible as in *could*.
2. Being required to do as in *should* or *need*.
3. Being willing to do as in *would*.
4. Being tentative or not sure as in *might* or *dare*.

Complete each starter with your own ending.

I could get high grades _____.

My teacher said we should _____.

I would be happy _____.

We might have to _____.

My parents said I need to _____.

He didn't dare _____.

Now use the contraction or negative of these words by completing the starters.

I couldn't get high grades _____.

My mother said we shouldn't _____.

I wouldn't be happy _____.

We might not have to _____.

The teacher said we needn't _____.

You dare not _____.

This time use the "paired forms" of these modal verbs by completing the question starters.

Can you _____?

Could you _____?

Shall I _____?

Should I _____?

Will we _____?

Would we _____?

May I _____?

Might I _____?

Here are more uses of the word *dare*. *Dare* can be used in many constructions and in all its verb forms. Complete each of these starters in your own words.

You wouldn't dare _____!

How dare you _____!

I dare not talk about _____.

I dare you to _____.

She dared her opponent to _____.

Daring everyone in the audience, the trapeze artist _____.

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CHAPTER TEN

Grammar for Word Play

MAKING GRAMMAR REALLY FUN

You have committed the following crimes . . . sowing confusion, upsetting the applectart, wreaking havoc, and mincing words.

(from the police officer Short Shrift in
The Phantom Tollbooth, Juster, 1989, p. 62)

"Mine is a long and sad tale!" said the Mouse turning to Alice and sighing. "It is a long tail, certainly," said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; "but why do you call it sad?"

(from *Alice's Adventures in
Wonderland*, Carroll, 1861/1995b, p. 30)

Playing with words is fun. That's why we do it. But it is also more than fun. Word play gives joy to language, making us laugh and making us think. Word play is the gift we get from language that allows us to tell jokes, describe people and events succinctly, feel included in a conversation, and smile, chuckle, grin, and guffaw. This chapter offers word-play activities that students will enjoy while gaining deeper meanings from words and sentences. All of these word-play activities help students reflect on the meanings, the humor, and the etymology of these terms and offer opportunities for class discussion, illustration, and lots of joyful writing. We include the following:

- metaphors, similes, and idioms
- oxymora
- eponyms
- colorful words
- affixes awry
- comedic characters

Many of the items in the previous list are likely to be taught by language arts or English teachers rather than in the "content areas." Yet, as you will

Figure 10.4 A Taxonomy of Oxymora

Directions: Oxymora are phrases which use two words with opposite meanings, such as a "clever fool." Select six of these oxymora and write a statement explaining why these words say what is "impossible" or contradictory. Examples follow the taxonomy.

• TAXONOMY •

A	almost always, almost never, almost impossible
B	big sip, baby grand (piano)
C	calm winds, clever fool
D	down elevator
E	exact estimate
F	false facts, fresh frozen foods
G	good grief
H	half empty, half true
I	ill health, inside out
J	junk food, just war
K	
L	lesser evil, loud whisper
M	minor disaster
N	near miss, nearly complete
O	old news, open secret
P	partial silence, perfect idiot
Q	quiet revolution, quiet scream
R	restless sleep, random order, rules of war
S	second best, sad clown
T	terribly good, tense calmness
U	unwelcome recess, unbiased opinion
V	vaguely aware, voluntary taxes
W	whole half, working vacation
X	
Y	young sixty
Z	zero defects

Examples of the Contradiction (Opposites) in Oxymora

Minor disaster—A disaster means a terrible event or tragedy. Minor means small or trivial. So how could a disaster be minor?

Working vacation—When we take a vacation, we don't expect to work. So how could we have a working vacation?

Eponyms

Eponyms are words that come from people's names, such as Boycott and Fahrenheit.

By learning eponyms, students get to know about famous (and infamous) people and the inventions or stories related to their names. Figure 10.5 gives a list of famous