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The Basic Grammar

Practice Book

Dee C. Konrad

Good Year Books



Dedication

In recognition of their superior understanding of language, I offer this accolade to two specialists in the world of words: Laura Layton Strom and Roberta Dempsey.

This book is dedicated to my Circle of Eight who also love language: Kris, Kerry, Nina, David, Alex, Zach, Julia, and Michael.

May all those who work with this book understand Anthony Hope who said: "Unless one is a genius, it is best to aim at being intelligible."



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Foreword

This *Basic Grammar Practice Book* provides opportunities for students in grades 6–10 to develop further their base of knowledge about the structure of language. A sound understanding of structure enables young writers to express their ideas efficiently and correctly.

As students move into the next century, they will realize dramatically how important clear communication, oral or written, will be for both their personal and professional lives. Communication is a hallmark of our society. As educators and family members, we have a serious responsibility to offer as many avenues as possible for students to enhance their communication skills.

Therefore, this practice book supplements classroom instruction and primary texts by reviewing familiar theory. It reinforces theoretical patterns by using the variables of time, various exercises, and repetition, all of which work to the advantage of students.

The major objective—for all of us: teachers, parents, and other involved adults—requires our assisting students to move into a broader dimension of language usage. Growth adds to confidence, an important characteristic for pupils in grades 6–10.

Through this practice book, we hope to stimulate the process by which students discover the power of the well-written word. Clear writing indicates clear thinking. Therein lies a core of communication. There also lies a promising future for these young learners and writers as they move into higher levels of education.



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How to Use This Book

The objectives of this book mirror standard ideas for the study of language and its guidelines:

1. Review of important rules of grammar
2. Reinforcement of the importance of standard English for oral and written communication
3. Demonstration of the relevance of grammar to students' academic lives and to their goals
4. Assistance in making writing an easier task with more satisfying results
5. Development of confidence in personal skill habits

The twenty separate sections of this practice book support these objectives. Each section offers theory and practice that promote further understanding of structure.

Theory pages not only review information but also add detail to promote growth in language usage. Students in grades 6–10 may have varying earlier instructional experiences. Therefore, the review becomes somewhat comprehensive. What may be new information flows forward easily on the base of what may be assumed to have been studied previously.

The exercises strengthen the students' knowledge of theory. Repetition becomes an important reinforcer for students in these grades. As they move successfully through the practice sessions, they develop their facility with language. This development in turn undergirds a new confidence in their ability to use language more appropriately and effectively in either oral or written communication.

Since some students are more visual learners than others, the use of color to identify parts of speech can be productive for them. *Red* for nouns and *green* for verbs, for example, are easy highlights for certain students. Individuals who require attention in a

developmental mode or have a learning disability are among those who can benefit from color as a study tool. It is yet another strategy to clarify the parts of speech.

An important identification of the sentence is its division into the subject and the predicate. Several critical grammatical elements are found in the predicate. To imprint the point of division, therefore, the main verb that has a relationship to the subject of the sentence has been termed the *predicate verb* in this book.

Teachers or parents can explain this issue and continue to use the term *predicate verb* or use the term *main verb*. Overall, understanding which word (or words) constitutes the verb that relates to the subject is the most important point.

The Pre-Test and Post-Test serve as evaluations for student and teacher or parent. Results from the Pre-Test enable the student to focus on any weakness and take pride in the strengths shown. Post-Test results supporting growth in usage and understanding will add to self-confidence with evidence of progress.

Using the Answer Key simplifies movement from exercise to exercise and provides a sense of independence for students. This type of freedom is pleasing to students in these grades. Opportunities can be offered to answer questions should they arise.

Tips for Teachers and Parents

These pages offer suggestions for working with the sections of this practice book. Most teachers and parents of students in grades 6–10 have many previous experiences in presenting the varied aspects of the English language. Therefore, these suggestions simply seek to add another layer to that experience.

For any of the theory pages:

1. Assign them as homework with discussion the following day.
2. Read them aloud in class. Have a question-and-answer period.
3. Have quiet study followed by a practice session.

For the practice pages:

1. The exercises can be part of ongoing instruction from other textbooks or lectures, or they can be a separate program.
2. The exercises can be assigned as homework with parental supervision.
3. Students might keep charts to show their successes.
4. If some students master a particular subject, they could be excused from working on further exercises.
5. The exercises might be used once a week, or more often, as is deemed appropriate.
6. Given the class level, students could be allowed to work ahead in an independent program.

Students in these grades enjoy rewards. Some kind of system of rewarding various degrees of achievement could stimulate their interest.

These students also like competition. They might work in groups on certain exercises and check to see which group has the highest score.

To extend their recognition of standard English and its communication, students could find examples of interesting writing in newspapers, magazines, or books. Examining those examples for vocabulary and sentence construction can highlight the expression of ideas.

Working in groups, students can create their own exercise pages for particular sections or for particular areas of concern and difficulty. These student-written exercises can be exchanged, answered, and critiqued by the students—with adult checks of the outcomes.

In the study of sentence construction, sentences can be divided into their various parts to be put together by the students, using paper words. Independent clauses and dependent clauses can also be examined in the same way.

A teacher or parent could put words or sentences cut from colored paper into envelopes and then assign a task, such as making sentences from the words or putting clauses together correctly.

Students can bring examples of special sentences; they can explain why they find those sentences significant. The sports pages could offer some stimulating lines for many students in grades 6–10.

Almost any exercise can be used to focus on several points. Using an adjective exercise, for example, to have students also find the subject and verb can be a useful review of a previous lesson. Going back regularly to check student consistency and internalization of an earlier lesson can be extremely helpful and revealing.

As students write their own exercises or special writing assignments, punctuation can be addressed with that material or with some of the exercises in the practice book.

The use of a few basic rules of punctuation can reinforce clear communication:

1. Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause.
2. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that divides independent clauses.
3. Use a pair of commas to set off interrupters.
4. Use a semicolon between two independent clauses that have a close relationship but are not connected with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

Since writing is the special goal for which grammar prepares the way, teachers or parents can add some extra writing assignments to the practice book exercises:

1. Ask students to participate in free writing by filling a page with words or groups of words. Then see if a pattern emerges.
2. Suggest students write a paragraph of their choice—serious, humorous, or descriptive.
3. Give a prompt of a topic sentence for a paragraph.
4. Let students suggest prompts for each other for paragraph writing.
5. Ask students to write a paragraph that focuses on using adjectives, adverbs, or verbals, for example.
6. Let students participate in constructive criticism.

Students in grades 6–10 have begun to think more broadly and more critically than in earlier grades. A number have become somewhat analytical. Therefore, they are entirely capable of following guided objectives with their own initiative and enthusiasm.