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**An English Grammar**

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# **AN ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

FOR THE USE OF  
HIGH SCHOOL, ACADEMY, AND COLLEGE CLASSES

**BY**

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1895

## PREFACE.

Of making many English grammars there is no end; nor should there be till theoretical scholarship and actual practice are more happily wedded. In this field much valuable work has already been accomplished; but it has been done largely by workers accustomed to take the scholar's point of view, and their writings are addressed rather to trained minds than to immature learners. To find an advanced grammar unencumbered with hard words, abstruse thoughts, and difficult principles, is not altogether an easy matter. These things enhance the difficulty which an ordinary youth experiences in grasping and assimilating the facts of grammar, and create a distaste for the study. It is therefore the leading object of this book to be both as scholarly and as practical as possible. In it there is an attempt to present grammatical facts as simply, and to lead the student to assimilate them as thoroughly, as possible, and at the same time to do away with confusing difficulties as far as may be.

To attain these ends it is necessary to keep ever in the foreground the *real basis of grammar*, that is, good literature. Abundant quotations from standard authors have been given to show the student that he is dealing with the facts of the language, and not with the theories of grammarians. It is also suggested that in preparing written exercises the student use English classics instead of "making up" sentences. But it is not intended that the use of literary masterpieces for grammatical purposes should supplant or even interfere with their proper use and real value as works of art. It will, however, doubtless be found helpful to alternate the regular reading and æsthetic study of literature with a grammatical study, so that, while the mind is being enriched and the artistic sense quickened, there may also be the useful acquisition of arousing a keen observation of all grammatical forms and usages. Now and then it has been deemed best to omit explanations, and to withhold personal preferences, in order that the student may, by actual contact with the sources of grammatical laws, discover for himself the better way in regarding given data. It is not the grammarian's business to "correct;" it is simply to record and to arrange the usages of language, and to point the way to the arbiters of usage in all disputed cases. Free expression within the lines of good usage should have widest range.

It has been our aim to make a grammar of as wide a scope as is consistent with the proper definition of the word. Therefore, in addition to recording and classifying the facts of language, we have endeavored to attain two other objects,—to cultivate mental skill and power, and to induce the student to prosecute further studies in this field. It is not supposable that in so delicate and difficult an undertaking there should be an entire freedom from errors and oversights. We shall gratefully accept any assistance in helping to correct mistakes.

Though endeavoring to get our material as much as possible at first hand, and to make an independent use of it, we desire to express our obligation to the following books and articles:—

Meiklejohn's "English Language," Longmans' "School Grammar," West's "English Grammar," Bain's "Higher English Grammar" and "Composition Grammar," Sweet's "Primer of Spoken English" and "New English Grammar," etc., Hodgson's "Errors in the Use of English," Morris's "Elementary Lessons in Historical English Grammar," Lounsbury's "English Language," Champney's "History of English," Emerson's "History of the English Language," Kellner's "Historical Outlines of English Syntax," Earle's "English Prose," and Matzner's "Englische Grammatik." Allen's "Subjunctive Mood in English," Battler's articles on "Prepositions" in the "Anglia," and many other valuable papers, have also been helpful and suggestive.

We desire to express special thanks to Professor W.D. Mooney of Wall & Mooney's Battle-Ground Academy, Franklin, Tenn., for a critical examination of the first draft of the manuscript, and to Professor Jno. M. Webb of Webb Bros. School, Bell Buckle, Tenn., and Professor W.R. Garrett of the University of Nashville, for many valuable suggestions and helpful criticism.

W.M. BASKERVILL.

J.W. SEWELL.

NASHVILLE, TENN., January, 1896.

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# INTRODUCTION.

So many slighting remarks have been made of late on the use of teaching grammar as compared with teaching science, that it is plain the fact has been lost sight of that grammar is itself a science. The object we have, or should have, in teaching science, is not to fill a child's mind with a vast number of facts that may or may not prove useful to him hereafter, but to draw out and exercise his powers of observation, and to show him how to make use of what he observes.... And here the teacher of grammar has a great advantage over the teacher of other sciences, in that the facts he has to call attention to lie ready at hand for every pupil to observe without the use of apparatus of any kind while the use of them also lies within the personal experience of every one.—Dr Richard Morris.

The proper study of a language is an intellectual discipline of the highest order. If I except discussions on the comparative merits of Popery and Protestantism, English grammar was the most important discipline of my boyhood.—John Tyndall.

## INTRODUCTION.

What various opinions writers on English grammar have given in answer to the question, *What is grammar?* may be shown by the following—

English grammar is a description of the usages of the English language by good speakers and writers of the present day.—Whitney

Definitions of grammar.

A description of account of the nature, build, constitution, or make of a language is called its grammar—Meiklejohn

Grammar teaches the laws of language, and the right method of using it in speaking and writing.—Patterson

Grammar is the science of *letter*; hence the science of using words correctly.—Abbott

The English word *grammar* relates only to the laws which govern the significant forms of words, and the construction of the sentence.—Richard Grant White

These are sufficient to suggest several distinct notions about English grammar—

(1) It makes rules to tell us how to use words.

(2) It is a record of usage which we ought to follow.

(3) It is concerned with the *forms* of the language.

(4) English *has* no grammar in the sense of forms, or inflections, but takes account merely of the nature and the uses of words in sentences.

Synopsis of the above.

Fierce discussions have raged over these opinions, and numerous works have been written to uphold the theories. The first of them remained popular for a very long time. It originated from the etymology of the word *grammar* (Greek *gramma*, writing, a letter), and from an effort to build up a treatise on English grammar by using classical grammar as a model.

The older idea and its origin.

Perhaps a combination of (1) and (3) has been still more popular, though there has been vastly more classification than there are forms.

During recent years, (2) and (4) have been gaining ground, but they have had hard work to displace the older and more popular theories. It is insisted by many that the student's time should be used in studying general literature, and thus learning the fluent and correct use of his mother tongue. It is also insisted that the study and discussion of forms and inflections is an inexcusable imitation of classical treatises.

The opposite view.

Which view shall the student of English accept? Before this is answered, we should decide whether some one of the above theories must be taken as the right one, and the rest disregarded.

The difficulty.

The real reason for the diversity of views is a confusion of two distinct things,—what the *definition* of grammar should be, and what the *purpose* of grammar should be.

The province of English grammar is, rightly considered, wider than is indicated by any one of the above definitions; and the student ought to have a clear idea of the ground to be covered.

The material of grammar.

It must be admitted that the language has very few inflections at present, as compared with

Latin or Greek; so that a small grammar will hold them all.

Few inflections.

It is also evident, to those who have studied the language historically, that it is very hazardous to make rules in grammar: what is at present regarded as correct may not be so twenty years from now, even if our rules are founded on the keenest scrutiny of the "standard" writers of our time. Usage is varied as our way of thinking changes. In Chaucer's time two or three negatives were used to strengthen a negation; as, "Ther *nas no* man *nowher* so vertuous" (There never was no man nowhere so virtuous). And Shakespeare used good English when he said *more elder* ("Merchant of Venice") and *most unkindest* ("Julius Cæsar"); but this is bad English now.

Making rules is risky.

If, however, we have tabulated the inflections of the language, and stated what syntax is the most used in certain troublesome places, there is still much for the grammarian to do.

Surely our noble language, with its enormous vocabulary, its peculiar and abundant idioms, its numerous periphrastic forms to express every possible shade of meaning, is worthy of serious study, apart from the mere memorizing of inflections and formulation of rules.

A broader view.

Grammar is eminently a means of mental training; and while it will train the student in subtle and acute reasoning, it will at the same time, if rightly presented, lay the foundation of a keen observation and a correct literary taste. The continued contact with the highest thoughts of the best minds will create a thirst for the "well of English undefiled."

Mental training. An æsthetic benefit.

Coming back, then, from the question, *What ground should grammar cover?* we come to answer the question, *What should grammar teach?* and we give as an answer the definition,

What grammar is.

*English grammar is the science which treats of the nature of words, their forms, and their uses and relations in the sentence.*

This will take in the usual divisions, "The Parts of Speech" (with their inflections), "Analysis," and "Syntax." It will also require a discussion of any points that will clear up difficulties, assist the classification of kindred expressions, or draw the attention of the student to everyday idioms and phrases, and thus incite his observation.

The work it will cover.

A few words here as to the *authority* upon which grammar rests.

Authority as a basis.

The statements given will be substantiated by quotations from the leading or "standard" literature of modern times; that is, from the eighteenth century on. This *literary English* is considered the foundation on which grammar must rest.

Literary English.

Here and there also will be quoted words and phrases from *spoken* or *colloquial English*, by which is meant the free, unstudied expressions of ordinary conversation and communication among intelligent people.

Spoken English.

These quotations will often throw light on obscure constructions, since they preserve turns of expressions that have long since perished from the literary or standard English.

Occasionally, too, reference will be made to *vulgar English*,—the speech of the uneducated and ignorant,—which will serve to illustrate points of syntax once correct, or standard, but now undoubtedly bad grammar.

Vulgar English.

The following pages will cover, then, three divisions:—

Part I. The Parts of Speech, and Inflections.

Part II. Analysis of Sentences.

Part III. The Uses of Words, or Syntax.

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# **PART I.**

## ***THE PARTS OF SPEECH.***



# NOUNS.

In the more simple *state* of the *Arabs*, the *nation* is free, because each of her sons disdains a base *submission* to the *will* of a *master*.—Gibbon.

By examining this sentence we notice several words used as names. The plainest name is *Arabs*, which belongs to a people; but, besides this one, the words *sons* and *master* name objects, and may belong to any of those objects. The words *state*, *submission*, and *will* are evidently names of a different kind, as they stand for ideas, not objects; and the word *nation* stands for a whole group.

Name words

When the meaning of each of these words has once been understood, the word naming it will always call up the thing or idea itself. Such words are called **nouns**.

A **noun** is a name word, representing directly to the mind an object, substance, or idea.

Definition.

Nouns are classified as follows:—

Classes of nouns.

(1) **Proper.**

(2) **Common.** (a) CLASS NAMES: i. Individual.  
ii. Collective.

(b) MATERIAL.

(3) **Abstract.** (a) ATTRIBUTE.  
(b) VERBAL

A **proper noun** is a name applied to a particular object, whether person, place, or thing.

Names for special objects.

It specializes or limits the thing to which it is applied, reducing it to a narrow application. Thus, *city* is a word applied to any one of its kind; but *Chicago* names one city, and fixes the attention upon that particular city. *King* may be applied to any ruler of a kingdom, but *Alfred the Great* is the name of one king only.

The word *proper* is from a Latin word meaning *limited, belonging to one*. This does not imply, however, that a proper name can be applied to only one object, but that each time such a name is applied it is fixed or proper to that object. Even if there are several Bostons or Manchesters, the name of each is an individual or proper name.

A **common noun** is a name possessed by *any* one of a class of persons, animals, or things.

Name for any individual of a class.

*Common*, as here used, is from a Latin word which means *general, possessed by all*.

For instance, *road* is a word that names *any* highway outside of cities; *wagon* is a term that names *any* vehicle of a certain kind used for hauling: the words are of the widest application. We may say, *the man here*, or *the man in front of you*, but the word *man* is here hedged in by other words or word groups: the name itself is of general application.

Besides considering persons, animals, and things separately, we may think of them in groups, and appropriate names to the groups.

Name for a group or collection of objects.

Thus, men in groups may be called a *crowd*, or a *mob*, a *committee*, or a *council*, or a *congress*, etc.

These are called **COLLECTIVE NOUNS**. They properly belong under common nouns, because each group is considered as a unit, and the name applied to it belongs to any group of its class.

The definition given for common nouns applies more strictly to class nouns. It may, however, be correctly used for another group of nouns detailed below; for they are common nouns in the sense that the names apply to *every particle of similar substance*, instead of to each individual or separate object.

Names for things thought of in mass.

They are called **MATERIAL NOUNS**. Such are *glass, iron, clay, frost, rain, snow, wheat, wine, tea, sugar, etc.*

They may be placed in groups as follows:—

(1) The metals: *iron, gold, platinum, etc.*

(2) Products spoken of in bulk: *tea, sugar, rice, wheat, etc.*

(3) Geological bodies: *mud, sand, granite, rock, stone, etc.*

(4) Natural phenomena: *rain, dew, cloud, frost, mist, etc.*

(5) Various manufactures: *cloth* (and the different kinds of cloth), *potash*, *soap*, *rubber*, *paint*, *celluloid*, etc.

**7. NOTE.**—There are some nouns, such as *sun*, *moon*, *earth*, which seem to be the names of particular individual objects, but which are not called proper names.

The reason is, that in proper names the intention is *to exclude* all other individuals of the same class, and fasten a special name to the object considered, as in calling a city *Cincinnati*; but in the words *sun*, *earth*, etc., there is no such intention. If several bodies like the center of our solar system are known, they also are called *suns* by a natural extension of the term: so with the words *earth*, *world*, etc. They remain common class names.

Words naturally of limited application not proper.

**Abstract nouns** are names of qualities, conditions, or actions, considered abstractly, or apart from their natural connection.

Names of ideas, not things.

When we speak of a *wise man*, we recognize in him an attribute or quality. If we wish to think simply of that quality without describing the person, we speak of the *wisdom* of the man. The quality is still there as much as before, but it is taken merely as a name. So *poverty* would express the condition of a poor person; *proof* means the act of proving, or that which shows a thing has been proved; and so on.

Again, we may say, "*Painting* is a fine art," "*Learning* is hard to acquire," "a man of *understanding*."

There are two chief divisions of abstract nouns:—

(1) ATTRIBUTE NOUNS, expressing attributes or qualities.

(2) VERBAL NOUNS, expressing state, condition, or action.

The **ATTRIBUTE ABSTRACT NOUNS** are derived from adjectives and from common nouns. Thus, (1) *prudence* from *prudent*, *height* from *high*, *redness* from *red*, *stupidity* from *stupid*, etc.; (2) *peerage* from *peer*, *childhood* from *child*, *mastery* from *master*, *kingship* from *king*, etc.

Attribute abstract nouns.

**II. The VERBAL ABSTRACT NOUNS** Originate in verbs, as their name implies. They may be

Verbal abstract nouns.

(1) Of the same form as the simple verb. The verb, by altering its function, is used as a noun; as in the expressions, "a long *run*" "a bold *move*," "a brisk *walk*."

(2) Derived from verbs by changing the ending or adding a suffix: *motion* from *move*, *speech* from *speak*, *theft* from *thieve*, *action* from *act*, *service* from *serve*.

(3) Derived from verbs by adding *-ing* to the simple verb. It must be remembered that these words are *free from any verbal function*. They cannot govern a word, and they cannot express action, but are merely *names* of actions. They are only the husks of verbs, and are to be rigidly distinguished from *gerunds* (Secs. 272, 273).

Caution.

To avoid difficulty, study carefully these examples:

The best thoughts and *sayings* of the Greeks; the moon caused fearful *forebodings*; in the *beginning* of his life; he spread his *blessings* over the land; the great Puritan *awakening*; our birth is but a sleep and a *forgetting*; a *wedding* or a festival; the rude *drawings* of the book; masterpieces of the Socratic *reasoning*; the *teachings* of the High Spirit; those opinions and *feelings*; there is time for such *reasonings*; the *well-being* of her subjects; her *longing* for their favor; *feelings* which their original *meaning* will by no means justify; the main *bearings* of this matter.

Some **abstract nouns** were not derived from any other part of speech, but were framed directly for the expression of certain ideas or phenomena. Such are *beauty*, *joy*, *hope*, *ease*, *energy*; *day*, *night*, *summer*, *winter*, *shadow*, *lightning*, *thunder*, etc.

Undeived abstract nouns.

The adjectives or verbs corresponding to these are either themselves derived from the nouns or are totally different words; as *glad*—*joy*, *hopeful*—*hope*, etc.

### Exercises.

1. From your reading bring up sentences containing ten common nouns, five proper, five abstract.

NOTE.—Remember that all sentences are to be *selected* from standard literature.

2. Under what class of nouns would you place (a) the names of diseases, as *pneumonia*, *pleurisy*, *catarrh*, *typhus*, *diphtheria*; (b) branches of knowledge, as *physics*, *algebra*, *geology*, *mathematics*?

3. Mention collective nouns that will embrace groups of each of the following individual nouns:—

man  
horse  
bird  
fish  
partridge  
pupil  
bee  
soldier  
book  
sailor  
child  
sheep  
ship  
ruffian

4. Using a dictionary, tell from what word each of these abstract nouns is derived:—

sight  
speech  
motion  
pleasure  
patience  
friendship  
deceit  
bravery  
height  
width  
wisdom  
regularity  
advice  
seizure  
nobility  
relief  
death  
raid  
honesty  
judgment  
belief  
occupation  
justice  
service  
trail  
feeling  
choice  
simplicity

### SPECIAL USES OF NOUNS.

By being used so as to vary their usual meaning, nouns of one class may be made to approach another class, or to go over to it entirely. Since words alter their meaning so rapidly by a widening or narrowing of their application, we shall find numerous examples of this shifting from class to class; but most of them are in the following groups. For further discussion see the remarks on articles (p. 119).

*Nouns change by use.*

**Proper nouns are used as common** in either of two ways:—

(1) *The origin of a thing is used for the thing itself.* that is, the name of the inventor may be applied to the thing invented, as a *davy*, meaning the miner's lamp invented by Sir Humphry Davy; the *guillotine*, from the name of Dr. Guillotin, who was its inventor. Or the name of the country or city from which an article is derived is used for the article: as *china*, from China; *arras*, from a town in France; *port* (wine), from Oporto, in Portugal; *levant* and *morocco* (leather).

*Proper names transferred to common use.*

Some of this class have become worn by use so that at present we can scarcely discover the derivation from the form of the word; for example, the word *port*, above. Others of similar character are *calico*, from Calicut; *damask*, from Damascus; *currants*, from Corinth; *etc.*

(2) *The name of a person or place noted for certain qualities is transferred to any person or place possessing those qualities; thus,—*

Hercules and Samson were noted for their strength, and we call a very strong man a *Hercules* or a *Samson*. Sodom was famous for wickedness, and a similar place is called a *Sodom* of sin.

*A Daniel* come to judgment!—Shakespeare.

If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a *Locke*, a *Lavoisier*, a *Hutton*, a *Bentham*, a *Fourier*, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system.—Emerson.

**Material nouns may be used as class names.** Instead of considering the whole body of material of which certain uses are made, one can speak of particular uses or phases of the substance; as—

Names for things in bulk altered for separate portions.

(1) *Of individual objects* made from metals or other substances capable of being wrought into various shapes. We know a number of objects made of iron. The material *iron* embraces the metal contained in them all; but we may say, "The cook made the *irons* hot," referring to flat-irons; or, "The sailor was put in *irons*" meaning chains of iron. So also we may speak of a *glass* to drink from or to look into; a *steel* to whet a knife on; a *rubber* for erasing marks; and so on.

(2) *Of classes or kinds* of the same substance. These are the same in material, but differ in strength, purity, etc. Hence it shortens speech to make the nouns plural, and say *teas*, *tobaccos*, *paints*, *oils*, *candies*, *clays*, *coals*.

(3) *By poetical use*, of certain words necessarily singular in idea, which are made plural, or used as class nouns, as in the following:—

The lone and level *sands* stretch far away.

From all around—

Earth and her *waters*, and the depths of air—

Comes a still voice.

—Bryant.

Their airy ears

*The winds* have stationed on the mountain peaks.

—Percival.

(4) *Of detached portions* of matter used as class names; as *stones*, *slates*, *papers*, *tins*, *clouds*, *mists*, etc.

**Abstract nouns are frequently used as proper names** by being personified; that is, the ideas are spoken of as residing in living beings. This is a poetic usage, though not confined to verse.

Personification of abstract ideas.

Next *Anger* rushed; his eyes, on fire,  
In lightnings owned his secret stings.

—Collins.

*Freedom's* fame finds wings on every wind.—Byron.

*Death*, his mask melting like a nightmare dream, smiled.—Hayne.

*Traffic* has lain down to rest; and only *Vice* and *Misery*, to prowl or to moan like night birds, are abroad.—Carlyle.

**Abstract nouns are made half abstract** by being spoken of in the plural.

A halfway class of words. Class nouns in use, abstract in meaning.

They are not then pure abstract nouns, nor are they common class nouns. For example, examine this:—

The *arts* differ from the *sciences* in this, that their power is founded not merely on *facts* which can be communicated, but on *dispositions* which require to be created.—Ruskin.

When it is said that *art* differs from *science*, that the power of art is founded on *fact*, that *disposition* is the thing to be created, the words italicized are pure abstract nouns; but in case *an art* or *a science*, or *the arts* and *sciences*, be spoken of, the abstract idea is partly lost. The words preceded by the article *a*, or made plural, are still names of abstract ideas, not material things; but they widen the application to separate kinds of *art* or different branches of *science*. They are neither class nouns nor pure abstract nouns: they are more properly called *half abstract*.

Test this in the following sentences:—

Let us, if we must have great *actions*, make our own so.—Emerson.

And still, as each repeated *pleasure* tired, Succeeding *sports* the mirthful band inspired.—Goldsmith.

But ah! those *pleasures, loves, and joys*  
Which I too keenly taste,  
The Solitary can despise.  
—Burns.

All these, however, were mere *terrors* of the night.—Irving.

**Nouns used as descriptive terms.** Sometimes a noun is attached to another noun to add to its meaning, or describe it; for example, "a *family* quarrel," "a *New York* bank," "the *State Bank Tax* bill," "a *morning* walk."

By ellipses, nouns used to modify.

It is evident that these approach very near to the function of adjectives. But it is better to consider them as nouns, for these reasons: they do not give up their identity as nouns; they do not express quality; they cannot be compared, as descriptive adjectives are.

They are more like the possessive noun, which belongs to another word, but is still a noun. They may be regarded as elliptical expressions, meaning a walk *in the morning*, a bank *in New York*, a bill *as to tax on the banks*, etc.

NOTE.—If the descriptive word be a *material* noun, it may be regarded as changed to an adjective. The term "*gold pen*" conveys the same idea as "*golden pen*," which contains a pure adjective.

### WORDS AND WORD GROUPS USED AS NOUNS.

Owing to the scarcity of distinctive forms, and to the consequent flexibility of English speech, words which are usually other parts of speech are often used as nouns; and various word groups may take the place of nouns by being used as nouns.

The noun may borrow from any part of speech, or from any expression.

(1) *Other parts of speech* used as nouns:—

*The great, the wealthy*, fear thy blow.—Burns.

Every *why* hath a *wherefore*.—Shakespeare.

When I was young? Ah, woeful *When!*  
Ah! for the change 'twixt *Now* and *Then!*  
—Coleridge.

Adjectives, Conjunctions, Adverbs.

(2) *Certain word groups* used like single nouns:—

*Too swift* arrives as tardy as *too slow*.—Shakespeare.

Then comes the "*Why, sir!*" and the "*What then, sir?*" and the "*No, sir!*" and the "*You don't see your way through the question, sir!*"—Macaulay

(3) Any part of speech may be considered merely as a word, without reference to its function in the sentence; also titles of books are treated as simple nouns.

The *it*, at the beginning, is ambiguous, whether it mean the sun or the cold.—Dr BLAIR

In this definition, is the word "*just*," or "*legal*," finally to stand?—Ruskin.

There was also a book of Defoe's called an "*Essay on Projects*," and another of Dr. Mather's called "*Essays to do Good*."—B. FRANKLIN.

It is to be remembered, however, that the above cases are shiftings of the *use*, of words rather than of their *meaning*. We seldom find instances of complete conversion of one part of speech into another.

Caution.

When, in a sentence above, the terms *the great, the wealthy*, are used, they are not names only: we have in mind the idea of persons and the quality of being *great* or *wealthy*. The words are used in the sentence where nouns are used, but have an adjectival meaning.

In the other sentences, *why* and *wherefore, When, Now, and Then*, are spoken of as if pure nouns; but still the reader considers this not a natural application of them as name words, but as a figure of speech.

NOTE.—These remarks do not apply, of course, to such words as become pure nouns by use. There are many of these. The adjective *good* has no claim on the noun *goods*; so, too, in speaking of the *principal* of a school, or a state *secret*, or a faithful *domestic*, or a *criminal*, etc., the words are entirely independent of any adjective force.

### Exercise.

Pick out the nouns in the following sentences, and tell to which class each belongs. Notice if any have shifted from one class to another.

1. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

2. Heaven from all creatures hides the book of Fate.

3.

Stone walls do not a prison make.  
Nor iron bars a cage.

4. Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named.

5. A great deal of talent is lost to the world for want of a little courage.

6.

Power laid his rod aside,  
And Ceremony doff'd her pride.

7. She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies.

8. Learning, that cobweb of the brain.

9.

A little weeping would ease my heart;  
But in their briny bed  
My tears must stop, for every drop  
Hinders needle and thread.

10. A fool speaks all his mind, but a wise man reserves something for hereafter.

11. Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much; Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

12. Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast.

13.

And see, he cried, the welcome,  
Fair guests, that waits you here.

14. The fleet, shattered and disabled, returned to Spain.

15. One To-day is worth two To-morrows.

16. Vessels carrying coal are constantly moving.

17.

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

18. And oft we trod a waste of pearly sands.

19.

A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays  
And confident to-morrows.

20. The hours glide by; the silver moon is gone.

21. Her robes of silk and velvet came from over the sea.

22. My soldier cousin was once only a drummer boy.

23.

But pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed.

## INFLECTIONS OF NOUNS.

### GENDER.

In Latin, Greek, German, and many other languages, some general rules are given that names of male beings are usually masculine, and names of females are usually feminine. There are exceptions even to this general statement, but not so in English. Male beings are, in English grammar, always masculine; female, always feminine.

What gender means in English. It is founded on sex.

When, however, *inanimate* things are spoken of, these languages are totally unlike our own in determining the gender of words. For instance: in Latin, *hortus* (garden) is masculine, *mensa* (table) is feminine, *corpus* (body) is neuter; in German, *das Messer* (knife) is neuter, *der Tisch* (table) is masculine, *die Gabel* (fork) is feminine.

The great difference is, that in English the gender follows the *meaning* of the word, in other languages gender follows the *form*; that is, in English, gender depends on *sex*: if a thing spoken of is of the male sex, the *name* of it is masculine; if of the female sex, the *name* of it is feminine. Hence:

**Gender** is the mode of distinguishing sex by words, or additions to words.

Definition.

It is evident from this that English can have but two genders,—**masculine** and **feminine**.

All nouns, then, must be divided into two principal classes,—**gender nouns**, those distinguishing the sex of the object; and **neuter nouns**, those which do not distinguish sex, or names of things without life, and consequently without sex.

Gender nouns. Neuter nouns.

Gender nouns include names of persons and some names of animals; neuter nouns include some animals and all inanimate objects.

Some words may be either gender nouns or neuter nouns, according to their use. Thus, the word *child* is neuter in the sentence, "A little *child* shall lead them," but is masculine in the sentence from Wordsworth,—

Some words either gender or neuter nouns, according to use.

I have seen  
A curious *child* ... applying to *his* ear  
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell.

Of animals, those with which man comes in contact often, or which arouse his interest most, are named by gender nouns, as in these sentences:—

Before the barn door strutted the gallant *cock*, that pattern of a husband, ... clapping *his* burnished wings.—Irving.

*Gunpowder* ... came to a stand just by the bridge, with a suddenness that had nearly sent *his* rider sprawling over *his* head—*Id.*

Other animals are not distinguished as to sex, but are spoken of as neuter, the sex being of no consequence.

Not a *turkey* but he [Ichabod] beheld daintily trussed up, with *its* gizzard under *its* wing.—Irving.

He next stooped down to feel the *pig*, if there were any signs of life in *it*.—Lamb.

According to the definition, there can be no such thing as "common gender:" words either distinguish sex (or the sex is distinguished by the context) or else they do not distinguish sex.

No "common gender."

If such words as *parent*, *servant*, *teacher*, *ruler*, *relative*, *cousin*, *domestic*, etc., do not show the sex to which the persons belong, they are neuter words.

Put convenient form, the division of words according to sex, or the lack of it, is,—

(MASCULINE: Male beings.

**Gender nouns** {

(FEMININE: Female beings.

**Neuter nouns:** Names of inanimate things, or of living beings whose sex cannot be determined.

The inflections for gender belong, of course, only to masculine and feminine nouns. *Forms* would be a more accurate word than *inflections*, since inflection applies only to the *case* of nouns.

There are three ways to distinguish the genders:—

- (1) By prefixing a gender word to another word.
- (2) By adding a suffix, generally to a masculine word.
- (3) By using a different word for each gender.

## I. Gender shown by Prefixes.

Usually the gender words *he* and *she* are prefixed to neuter words; as *he-goat—she-goat*, *cock sparrow—hen sparrow*, *he-bear—she-bear*.

Very few of class I.

One feminine, *woman*, puts a prefix before the masculine *man*. *Woman* is a short way of writing *wifeman*.

## II. Gender shown by Suffixes.

By 29, the largest number of gender words are those marked by suffixes. In this particular the native endings have been largely supplanted by foreign suffixes.

The **native suffixes** to indicate the feminine were *-en* and *-ster*. These remain in *vixen* and *spinster*, though both words have lost their original meanings.

Native suffixes.

The word *vixen* was once used as the feminine of *fox* by the Southern-English. For *fox* they said *vox*; for *from* they said *vram*; and for the older word *fat* they said *vat*, as in *wine vat*. Hence *vixen* is for *fyxen*, from the masculine *fox*.

*Spinster* is a relic of a large class of words that existed in Old and Middle English,<sup>[1]</sup> but have now lost their original force as feminines. The old masculine answering to *spinster* was *spinner*, but *spinster* has now no connection with it.

The **foreign suffixes** are of two kinds:—

(1) Those belonging to borrowed words, as *czarina*, *señorita*, *executrix*, *donna*. These are attached to foreign words, and are never used for words recognized as English.

Foreign suffixes. Unaltered and little used.

(2) That regarded as the standard or regular termination of the feminine, *-ess* (French *esse*, Low Latin *issa*), the one most used. The corresponding masculine may have the ending *-er* (*-or*), but in most cases it has not. Whenever we adopt a new masculine word, the feminine is formed by adding this termination *-ess*.

Slightly changed and widely used.

Sometimes the *-ess* has been added to a word already feminine by the ending *-ster*, as *seam-str-ess*, *song-str-ess*. The ending *-ster* had then lost its force as a feminine suffix; it has none now in the words *huckster*, *gamester*, *trickster*, *punster*.

The 30 ending *-ess* is added to many words without changing the ending of the masculine; as,—

Ending of masculine not changed.

baron—baroness  
count—countess  
lion—lioness  
Jew—Jewess  
heir—heiress  
host—hostess  
priest—priestess  
giant—giantess

The masculine ending may be dropped before the feminine *-ess* is added; as,—

Masculine ending dropped.

abbot—abbess  
negro—negress  
murderer—murderess  
sorcerer—sorceress

The feminine may discard a vowel which appears in the masculine; as in—

Vowel dropped before adding *-ess*.

actor—actress  
master—mistress  
benefactor—benefactress  
emperor—empress



tiger—tigress  
enchanter—enchantress

*Empress* has been cut down from *emperice* (twelfth century) and *emperesse* (thirteenth century), from Latin *imperatricem*.

*Master* and *mistress* were in Middle English *maister—maistresse*, from the Old French *maistre—maistresse*.

When the older *-en* and *-ster* went out of use as the distinctive mark of the feminine, the ending *-ess*, from the French *-esse*, sprang into a popularity much greater than at present.

Instead of saying *doctress*, *fosteress*, *wagoness*, as was said in the sixteenth century, or *servauntesse*, *teacheresse*, *neighboreesse*, *frendesse*, as in the fourteenth century, we have dispensed with the ending in many cases, and either use a prefix word or leave the masculine to do work for the feminine also.

Ending *-ess* less used now than formerly.

Thus, we say *doctor* (masculine and feminine) or *woman doctor*, *teacher* or *lady teacher*, *neighbor* (masculine and feminine), *etc.* We frequently use such words as *author*, *editor*, *chairman*, to represent persons of either sex.

NOTE.—There is perhaps this distinction observed: when we speak of a female as an *active agent* merely, we use the masculine termination, as, "George Eliot is the *author* of 'Adam Bede,'" but when we speak purposely to denote a *distinction from a male*, we use the feminine, as, "George Eliot is an eminent *authoress*."

### III. Gender shown by Different Words.

In some of these pairs, the feminine and the masculine are entirely different words; others have in their origin the same root. Some of them have an interesting history, and will be noted below:—

bachelor—maid  
boy—girl  
brother—sister  
drake—duck  
earl—countess  
father—mother  
gander—goose  
hart—roe  
horse—mare  
husband—wife  
king—queen  
lord—lady  
wizard—witch  
nephew—niece  
ram—ewe  
sir—madam  
son—daughter  
uncle—aunt  
bull—cow  
boar—sow

**Girl** originally meant a child of either sex, and was used for male or female until about the fifteenth century.

**Drake** is peculiar in that it is formed from a corresponding feminine which is no longer used. It is not connected historically with our word *duck*, but is derived from *ened* (duck) and an obsolete suffix *rake* (king). Three letters of *ened* have fallen away, leaving our word *drake*.

**Gander** and **goose** were originally from the same root word. *Goose* has various cognate forms in the languages akin to English (German *Gans*, Icelandic *gás*, Danish *gaas*, etc.). The masculine was formed by adding *-a*, the old sign of the masculine. This *gansa* was modified into *gan-ra*, *gand-ra*, finally *gander*, the *d* being inserted to make pronunciation easy, as in many other words.

**Mare**, in Old English *mere*, had the masculine *meath* (horse), but this has long been obsolete.

**Husband** and **wife** are not connected in origin. *Husband* is a Scandinavian word (Anglo-Saxon *hūsbonda* from Icelandic *hús-bóndi*, probably meaning house dweller); *wife* was used in Old and Middle English to mean woman in general.

**King** and **queen** are said by some (Skeat, among others) to be from the same root word, but the German etymologist

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