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Ann Raimes

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**ANN RAIMES**

*Hunter College, City University of New York*



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*This book is dedicated to my daughters  
Emily Raimés and Lucy Raimés,  
whose adventures with language constantly divert  
and inspire me*

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# Preface: To the Instructor

*How English Works: A Grammar Handbook with Readings* is designed for classroom use with intermediate and advanced students of English. Such a range of abilities can easily be addressed in a book of this kind: as we teachers know only too well, even advanced students who speak and understand English with apparent ease can still make many errors when they write and can still have surprising gaps in understanding.

## THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK

*How English Works* is unique in that it offers grammatical instruction and exercises based on published readings. Part II contains sixteen glossed readings; Part I contains grammar chapters that use the readings for examples and exercises.

In Part I, each grammar chapter (1 through 27) contains the following:

- An excerpt from one of the sixteen readings in Part II
- A series of tasks for inductive analysis of the form and function of a grammar point in the reading
- Explanations of grammar points, with charts, tables, and examples
- Exercises, both oral and written
- Authentic student writing for editing
- A focused writing task that elicits the structure
- Editing advice

Chapters 28 and 29 address concerns of style and punctuation. These chapters also provide examples and exercises from the readings. In addition, the appendices provide students with easy access to irregular verb forms and spelling conventions.

The book, with its inductive approach to grammar, has four distinctive teaching features: readings, clear presentation of the basic principles of grammar, a wide variety of exercises, and tasks for writing and editing.

## PREFACE

**Readings**

The grammar points are introduced and illustrated in the real-life context of authentic, unadapted readings. The sixteen glossed readings cover a variety of topics and levels of difficulty. These readings, from nonfiction, journalism, and textbooks, have been carefully chosen as representative of the sorts of writing students are likely to come across at this stage of their studies (in both assigned reading for courses and pleasure reading). Each reading provides the introductory focus for one or more grammar chapters as well as the basis for exercises in other chapters.

Why readings? Why not just isolated sentences written to illustrate a grammatical structure? Well, quite apart from the fact that they are, I believe, far more interesting in themselves than any passages concocted with the sole purpose of illustrating grammatical points in a textbook, these readings show students the real thing. This is indeed “how English works.” Students see grammar in action, grammar as it is used in real life and real language.

**Clear Presentation of the Basic Principles of Grammar**

The book presents the basic principles of how English works for general academic purposes. It describes the common, frequently used structures of English for intermediate students and for more advanced students who have gaps in their knowledge or need review. It explains common exceptions to general principles, helping students to make sense of the patterns they see when they read. However, it does not attempt to cover every nuance of the language, every exception to every rule, every facet of specialized disciplines. Students need to know patterns that they can rely on, that will work for them *most* of the time. This book, then, offers broad strokes, not minute detail. Wherever possible, boxes, charts, and tables are used to clarify and highlight grammatical structures.

**A Wide Variety of Exercises**

To suit as many different learning (and teaching) styles as possible, the exercises include

- Group tasks
- Individual writing tasks
- Communicative oral exercises
- Error identification exercises
- “Right answer” selection exercises
- Open-ended exercises

## PREFACE

- Exercises related to the readings
- Exercises using short, illustrative sentences

Some of the exercises allow students to focus on a grammatical feature by presenting it in a short, illustrative pattern sentence of a type familiar to them from other language-learning activities. Many other exercises, however, use the readings to provide subject matter and context. Exercises designated as “oral” can be used in class. Others, primarily written, can be done in class or as a homework assignment. Linguistically challenging exercises, more suitable for advanced students, are marked with a five-point star (☆).

## Tasks for Writing and Editing

*How English Works* is based on the premise that students can't really work on improving their grammar while they are speaking. The nature of spoken communication simply does not leave room for extensive monitoring or for review of the language produced. While the book provides frequent opportunity for oral practice, many of its exercises are designed to focus on reading and writing, when students have time to analyze, recall, discuss, and apply principles of grammar. In addition, each chapter ends with a writing task designed to elicit the principles of the chapter. Students produce a text they can examine and revise, thus seeing how *their* English works.

The book links writing and grammar with editing techniques. At the end of each chapter, editing guidelines that focus on the grammar principle of the chapter are presented. Students are encouraged to use what they have learned about the workings of English to correct errors and make improvements—and they do this both with their own writing and with the samples of authentic student writing included in each chapter.

So in each chapter, reading leads to analysis, which leads to study of principles followed by practice, which then leads to writing and editing—that is, to the application of principles of grammar.

## HOW TO USE THE BOOK

*How English Works* provides you with flexibility. You can begin with the grammar chapters, referring to the complete readings only when necessary. Or, if your focus is more on accuracy in writing than on a systematic, overall review of grammar, you can begin with the readings and their associated writing topics; then you can let the students' needs (as revealed in their written assignments) determine which grammar chapters you address.

## PREFACE

If you want to spend more time with the complete readings before turning to grammar analysis, additional activities (under the headings “Preview Questions,” “Response Questions,” and “Analysis”) appear in the Instructor’s Manual. The Instructor’s Manual also provides guidelines for organizing a course, teaching the chapters, dealing with errors, and preparing students for essay examinations, as well as an answer key for the exercises.

With *How English Works*, my students say that they start to see grammar as an interesting, vital part of a living language, not just as something to get right or wrong in textbook sentences. I hope the book works as well for you and your students as it has for us.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Warm thanks go to the students in my ESL writing classes at Hunter College, many of whose names appear in this book. They helped me by working and commenting on exercises developed here and generously allowed me to include samples of their own writing. Their enthusiasm and willingness to learn were a constant source of inspiration.

Thanks, too, to the readers of the manuscript at its various stages, who all took time from their busy schedules to read with great care and sensitivity: Margaret Lindstrom, Colorado State University; Patrick Aquilina, American Language Program, Columbia University; Robert Kantor, Ohio State University; Stephen Thewlis, San Francisco State University; Cheryl Ruggiero, Virginia Polytechnic; and Amy Sales, Boston University. I am grateful to all of them for their valuable advice.

All the staff members at St. Martin’s Press continue to impress me with their creativity and efficiency. It was especially rewarding to work with Joyce Hinnefeld, project editor, who kept track of cuts, changes, and last-minute revising without getting flustered. Susan Anker, editor-in-chief, helped guide the development of this book; thanks go to her again for giving me the benefit of her knowledge, common sense, and warm encouragement.

A colleague once told me that he’d noticed how acknowledgments in my books always mentioned my family and seemed to escalate in praise of their contribution. No wonder. By the sixth or seventh book, they must be tired of seeing me sitting at my processor while they make dinner and do all those nasty household chores. So at the risk of repetition and even more escalation, I’ll end again by acknowledging my huge debt to James, Emily, and Lucy Raimes. So much of this is really their book.

ANN RAIMES

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