



Preface to the Instructor

“What’s the catch?” you might be asking. “What are people’s photographs doing in this textbook? And just how will they help me teach *English Essentials: What Everyone Needs to Know about Grammar, Punctuation, and Usage?*”

We think the student-pleasing photographs are just one of a number of features that distinguish this book from other grammar texts on the market:

1 Personal photos and stories. All too often, grammar books are dry, dull affairs, about as interesting as a study of rock dust on the planet Mars. As teachers, we sometimes felt we were leading our students on a death march when we moved them through a traditional grammar text. So we have added a strong human dimension to this book by illustrating the grammar skills with photos and stories of interesting people from all walks of life. The stories describe not only their personal lives but also their involvement with reading and writing. Some of these people are pictured on the cover of the book.

2 Ease of use. All of the following make the book easy for students to understand and use:

- The essentials are presented in a highly accessible way. Take a look at any of the one-page reviews that open each of the skill chapters in Part One—the first such review is on page 27. Just the basics of each skill are presented on this page, which students can read and understand fairly quickly. Once they have grasped this basic material, they can go on to learn additional information about the skill and practice applying the skill.

It is better to learn a step at a time than to risk confusion by trying to learn everything at once. For example, dependent-word fragments are the subject of one chapter; other common fragments appear in a second chapter. The most common homonyms are covered in Part One; other homonyms follow in the chapter “More about Homonyms” in Part Two.

- The chapters are self-contained, so that students can work on just those skills they need.
- Explanations are written in simple, familiar language, with a real emphasis on clarity and a minimum of grammatical terminology.
- An inviting two-color design has been used throughout, with headings and other design elements chosen to make the content as clear as possible.
- Finally, the book is written in a friendly and helpful tone of voice—one that never condescends to students, but instead treats them as adults.

- 3 **Abundant practice.** The book is based on the assumption that students learn best when clear explanations are followed by abundant practice. For each chapter in Part One, there are three full-page activities and five full-page tests. The last two tests are designed to resemble standardized tests and permit easy grading, including the use of Scantron sheets.
- 4 **Engaging materials.** In addition to the photos and true stories, lively and engaging examples and practice materials will help maintain student interest throughout the book.
- 5 **Inclusiveness.** The Introduction includes a brief guide to writing and a series of writing assignments to help students practice the grammar, punctuation, and usage skills that appear in the rest of the book. A combined forty years of teaching experience has taught us that applying the skills in actual writing situations helps students truly master them. Part One consists of primary information about fourteen key skills. Part Two presents secondary information about these skills and also covers topics not discussed in Part One. Part Three offers guidance and practice in the crucial skill of proofreading. And Part Four deals with areas that some other grammar texts neglect: spelling improvement, parts of speech, and dictionary use. Within the covers of *English Essentials*, then, are all the basic writing materials that instructors and students are likely to need.
- 6 **Superior supplements.** The following supplements are available at no charge to instructors adopting the book:
 - An Instructor's Edition that is identical to the student text except that it includes answers to all the practices and tests.
 - A combined Instructor's Manual and Test Bank that includes teaching hints, diagnostic and achievement tests, a full answer key, and a bank of additional mastery tests.
 - A Student Answer Key consisting of answers for all the activities in Part One and to the practices and tests in the rest of the book. Upon request, a key will be provided for each book that is ordered.
 - Software consisting of thirty-four computer mastery tests as well as computerized diagnostic and achievement tests.
 - Online exercises for each chapter in Part One. Users of the book can access these exercises by visiting the Townsend Press website.

In short, *English Essentials* is designed as a core worktext that will both engage the interest of today's students and help them truly master the skills they need for writing well.

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