A combination textbook-workbook on Business English, Conversation and Correspondence for students of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ESL (English as a Second Language)

Armando Aceituno M.
INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in technology, plus the world of globalization have caused our classrooms to change substantially. Nowadays, the teacher needs to understand a lot more about technology than he/she used to. It is not enough to be fluent in the English language to be able to teach it. If you do not possess the skills that this new world and new millenium require, you will be hopelessly left behind.

This Business English and Conversation book was created thinking about the specific needs of the ESL-EFL teachers and their students. It is meant to serve as a useful guide to aid in the development of the fluency needed in and out of the classroom.

Because of the grammar and correspondence requirements of our world, this modernized and up-to-date series offers these characteristics:

◊ General exercises which help the students develop all four basic skills:
  ✓ Listening ✓ Speaking
  ✓ Reading ✓ Writing

◊ Grammar practice and reviews
◊ A correspondence section with varied samples of the common business documents.
◊ Business, Internet, data processing and general vocabulary
◊ Optional conversation, writing and spelling exercises
◊ General reviews and recycling of all material.

As is the case with most other works of this nature, this book is as complete as humanly possible, but it can still use your helpful suggestions on how to make it better. Please send your comments or questions either to grandowner@yahoo.com or flacapuntas@hotmail.com.

Armando Aceituno M.
Some reference works define Business English as the correct and proper way to use the language. But how can you use the language properly unless you know it well from its foundation?

Think of it this way:

When you build a house, what do you build first? Do you install the roof before the foundation? Never. You lay the foundation first.

That’s also the way to build correct habits on using the language, from its very own foundation.

This book does exactly that. It begins from the foundations of language: the parts of speech. It goes into each and every one of them in a brief yet comprehensive way, from the simple ones like nouns to the more complex ones like auxiliary verbs. Then it goes into using those parts of speech correctly in sentences.

Once you know how to use the parts of speech in sentences, we will go into some important items such as tag questions, conditions with if, capitalization, and punctuation marks. You will then be ready to start building paragraphs that make sense and accomplish their objective. Afterwards, you can go into making effective business documents.

Furthermore, as you progress by doing the required and optional exercises in the book, you will be putting your conversational skills to work.

The section on correspondence also begins from the simple parts of the letter, then goes into all the different styles and types of letters. Samples of each type
of letter are included, as well as exercises to help you put your writing skills at work.

**How can you best use the book to your advantage?**

It depends on your own situation. Therefore, carefully analyze your needs before you begin, then adapt the book to suit those needs, not the other way around. *Business English and Conversation* has been developed based on past experiences with groups of all types and levels, but it is up to you to use it in the way that you best think fit.

**What we did not include:**

**Pronunciation:** The English language pronunciation cannot be written, unless we use the international symbols which have been designed and created specifically for that purpose. This is because English has more than 40 recognized sounds, many of which do not exist in other languages. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to write the pronunciation even of simple words like **CUT**. The sound of the letter **U** in **CUT** is pronounced in a way which cannot be accurately represented with the basic alphabet. In addition to this, it is a known fact that good pronunciation can best be learned by **listening** to the teacher and other speakers of the language.
About the author

Armando Aceituno M. has been teaching ESL and EFL for over twenty years.

A textbook author, teacher trainer, lecturer, novelist, poet, playwright and screenwriter, he has published more than twenty five books for teachers and students of ESL and EFL. His textbooks have been used at hundreds of schools located in several areas of his native Latin America. He has also published poetry, short stories, and manuals on diverse computer programs.

His EFL-ESL works include:

- Bilingual Dictionary - English/Spanish
- Better English Today, Books 1, 2 and 3
- TOEFL Workshop - A Practical Approach
- Commercial English and Correspondence
- Freedom, Books 1, 2 and 3
- English Magic, Books 1-6
- English Power, Books 1, 2 and 3
- English Control, Books 1, 2 and 3
- English Literature for the EFL-ESL classroom
- EFL-ESL Teachers’ Handbook, under production
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PART I

Structure and Conversation
English, like most structured languages, has a strong foundation: the parts of speech.

The main parts of speech are:

Nouns  Pronouns  Adjectives  Adverbs  Prepositions  Conjunctions  Interjections  Verbs

Look at this example:

For Christmas, my sister gave me a computer and some very nice programs. Great!

The example above contains most of the main parts of speech:

Nouns: Christmas, sister, computer, programs
Pronoun: me
Adjectives: my, some, nice
Conjunction: and
Adverb: very
Preposition: for
Verb: gave
Interjection: Great!

Are parts of speech important? They are essential! Without them, we don’t have a language and we can’t communicate.
A: I think parts of speech are important.
B: Why?
A: Because most languages have them.
B: That doesn’t prove anything.
A: Yes, it does.
B: What does it prove?
A: It proves their importance in everyday communication.

We all need to know what the parts of speech are, but more important than that, we must know how to use them correctly.

This entire section of the book will teach you what each part of speech is and how to use it well. We’ll begin by looking at nouns.

We all need to know what the parts of speech are, but more important than that, we must know how to use them correctly.

Now, complete the dialogue below with any appropriate words. Some spaces may have more than one possible answer. Share with your teacher or classmates when you are done.

A: Do you _______ parts of speech are _____________?
B: Yes, I _______________.
A: Why?
B: Because __________languages have them.
A: What does that ____________?
B: Their importance in everyday ______________.
Nouns are the most common words in the language, because they identify everything that surrounds us.

Nouns give name to people, things, places, animals, and ideas or concepts.

PEOPLE
Louise
uncle
sister
brother
nurse

THINGS
liquid
Internet
car
tower
monitor

PLACES
market
Mexican
office
world
bookstore

ANIMALS
eagle
frog
kangaroo
butterfly
tiger

CONCEPTS
peace
love
boredom
anxiety
happiness

Nouns have several characteristics.
Among others, they can sometimes be masculine, feminine, or neutral. They can also be singular, plural, proper, common, and can even specify number.

MASCULINE
man
lion
prince
bull
steward
actor

FEMININE
girl
lioness
princess
cow
stewardess
actress

NEUTRAL
president
Internet
doctor
secretary
program
computer

NUMBER
unicorn
bicycle
triplets
quartet
pentathlon
octopus

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A. Explain the following terms orally or in writing.

Internet ________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
boredom______________________________________________
______________________________________________________
anxiety________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
pentathlon____________________________________________
______________________________________________________
concept ________________________________________________
______________________________________________________

B. With a partner or in groups, discuss the following terms. As an option, you might also want to use them in complete and correct sentences.

essential importance surround lioness
triplets unicorn tower steward

D. Optional Conversation Practice. With a partner or in groups, create and present a brief dialogue in which you use several feminine nouns.
C. Answer the following questions orally or in writing.

What is a noun?
________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Why are nouns important?
_________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

What characteristics do nouns have?
________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Do you think nouns have the same characteristics in all languages? Why?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

What characteristics do nouns have in your native language?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Now, complete the paragraph below with any appropriate words. Some spaces may have more than one possible answer.

Nouns are ___________ in every language. They ___________ names to people, things, objects, and ___________. They serve to remind us what it is that we ___________ facing, owning, obtaining, etc. And since nouns ___________ the names of every thing that surrounds us, they do ___________ in all the languages of the world. A world without nouns would not be a ___________ at all.
Proper nouns talk about a specific person, thing, animal or place. They should always begin with a capital letter.

Common nouns are not specific and are not capitalized unless they begin a sentence or phrase.

PROPER NOUNS
Paula
Los Angeles
Wall Street
Channel 7
Belmont High School

COMMON NOUNS
keyboard
glass
printer
telephone
mouse

Let’s practice. If the noun is proper, write “P”. If it is common, write “C”.

1. _____Alice 11. _____snow
2. _____mother 12. _____Denver
3. _____niece 13. _____box
4. _____Ronald 14. _____book
5. _____accountant 15. _____Marie
6. _____Guatemala 16. _____Beverly
7. _____turkey 17. _____lion
8. _____McDonald’s 18. _____hospital
9. _____hippo 19. _____Regional Hospital
10. _____mouse 20. _____park
Optional Writing Practice: Write 5 common nouns and 5 proper nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMON</th>
<th>PROPER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ____________________</td>
<td>1. __________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ____________________</td>
<td>2. __________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ____________________</td>
<td>3. __________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ____________________</td>
<td>4. __________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ____________________</td>
<td>5. __________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most nouns have a singular form and a plural form. There are some very strict rules that must be followed when we write the plural form. However, there are so many exceptions to some of these rules, that your best bet would be to use a good dictionary when you are not sure how a word is spelled.

In most cases, all you need to do is add an “S” to the singular form.

- hat — hats
- race — races
- farm — farms
- control — controls
- eye — eyes
- boy — boys
- hero — heroes
- patio — patios
- tomato — tomatoes
- shampoo — shampoos
- ...
When a noun ends in “y” preceded by a consonant, the “y” is changed into “i” then “es” is added.

- diary        diaries
- story        stories

But, if the noun ends in “y” after a vowel, then we just add “s”.

- play         plays
- toy          toys

When the noun ends in X, Z, SH, CH, or S, you need to add “ES” to form the plural.

- ash          ashes
- watch        watches
- box          boxes
- class        classes

If the noun ends in “f” or “fe”, we usually change the ending to “ves”.

- wife         wives
- life         lives
- loaf         loaves
- knife        knives

However, there are many exceptions to this rule:

- safe         safes
- chief        chiefs
- cuff         cuffs
- roof         roofs

We also find some nouns which have irregular plural forms.

- child        children
- man          men
- mouse        mice
- tooth        teeth
- die          dice
- goose        geese
- ox           oxen
- woman        women
- louse        lice
- foot         feet
- fungus       fungi
- pensum       pensa
Last but not least, there are nouns which use the same form in singular or plural:

sheep  deer  moose  buffalo  fish

“Fish” uses the same form when it refers to fish of the same species. When we talk about different species, then we use the form “fishes.”

Practice A. Write the plural form of each noun.

1. play_____________  11. toy ______________
2. woman___________  12. sinner_____________
3. cliff_____________  13. church_____________
4. class_____________  14. secretary___________
5. match___________  15. box _______________
6. symbol___________  16. wife_______________
7. louse_____________  17. ledger_____________
8. sentence___________  18. mouse_____________
9. grape_____________  19. dish_______________
10. boot______________  20. foot________________

Optional Pronunciation Practice – Read aloud all the words from Practice A.

Optional Conversation Practice - Select five words from Practice A and use them in sentences or in a short dialogue with a partner.
Practice A. How many different nouns can you spot in each picture?

Practice B. Write any plural nouns you see here.

Practice C. Write all the common nouns you find.

Optional. Discuss the photographs. In which continent do you think each place is located? Any idea as to the specific countries?
Practice B: If the noun is proper, write “P”. If it is common, write “C”.

1. ______ Lake Elsinore       6. _____ Nail Corporation
2. _____ street              7. _____ U.S. Government
3. _____ church              8. _____ noun
4. _____ First National Bank 9. _____ directory
5. _____ nail                10. _____ Jennifer

Optional Conversation Practice – Explain to your classmates what the following terms mean: sinner, church, symbol, louse, ledger.

Optional Spelling Practice – Spell aloud the plural form of the following nouns: child, ox, man, woman, mouse, louse, tooth, die, fungus, goose.

Optional Reading and Writing Practice – Look up the meanings of the following words: ledger, symbol, cliff, die (noun), fungus, pensive, update, mainframe. Write the meanings in the space provided. Afterwards, discuss them with a partner or in groups.

ledger

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

symbol

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

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As you probably remember, we use “an” before vowels, silent “h” or short “u.”

an asterisk an orange
an upgrade an honest man
an ugly man an apple

“A” is used before a consonant or the long “u” sound:

a diskette a tape a directory
a horse a united family a symbol
a union a university a keyboard
Practice A - Write “a” or “an” before each noun.
1. ______ outstanding boy 6. ______ index
2. ______ account 7. ______ e-mail
3. ______ evening 8. ______ assistant
4. ______ chat club 9. ______ university
5. ______ night 10. ______ box

Conversation Tidbit

Explain to your classmates what the following terms mean: united, outstanding, chat club, e-mail, symbol.

Optional Spelling Practice – Your teacher will select several words from the previous pages for you to spell aloud.

How many more nouns can you connect?

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1. Mass nouns are those that can’t be counted. With Mass Nouns we use **Much**.

**MASS** = She has more cake than I. (A larger portion)  
**COUNT** = She has more cakes than I. (More whole cakes)

Some mass nouns:
- water  
- rice  
- coffee  
- homework  
- sugar  
- love  
- beef  
- gasoline  
- work  
- peace  
- trust  
- confidence

2. Count nouns can be counted. With these, we use **Many**.

Some count nouns:
- cups  
- glasses  
- pieces  
- teaspoons  
- plates  
- meals  
- doors  
- marbles  
- hands  
- boxes  
- wishes  
- thoughts

Some nouns can be used in either way depending on the sentence. Sometimes we can use **HOW MANY** with count nouns if we add a unit of measure.

HOW MANY  
- glasses of water..  
- teaspoons of sugar...  
- ounces of oil...  
- cups of coffee...

**Practice A. Underline the mass nouns in the following sentences.**

1. How much oil do you need?  
2. Do you have some sugar left?  
3. Would you like some hot pepper sauce?  
4. Please bring me some ketchup.  
5. We don’t have any salt.  
6. Did you buy the vinegar?  
7. Don’t forget the pepper.  
8. Let’s buy some milk.  
9. Bring me some juice, please.  
10. Would you like some beef?
Practice B. With the help of your teacher, match the mass nouns with an appropriate unit of measure. Some mass nouns may use the same unit or use more than one.

(____) milk  a. bag  
(____) water  b. sack  
(____) salt  c. cup  
(____) beans  d. litter  
(____) rice  e. gallon  
(____) ketchup  f. package  
(____) tea  g. ounce  
(____) wine  h. glass  
  i. bottle

Notice the use of FEWER, LESS, and AS... AS:

I have fewer marbles than you.  
You have fewer socks than I.  
She has fewer friends than we.  

COUNT NOUNS

I have less coffee than you.  
You have less chicken than I.  
She has less salt than we.  

MASS NOUNS

I have as many marbles as you.  
You have as many shoes as I.  
She has as many friends as we.  

COUNT NOUNS

I have as much coffee as you.  
You have as much chicken as I.  
She has as much salt as we.  

MASS NOUNS

FEWER should be used with count nouns.  
LESS should be used with mass nouns.  
AS... AS can be used with both types of nouns.
Practice C. Complete each blank with FEWER or LESS as appropriate. Some sentences may have more than one possible answer.

1. She has __________ cassettes than I.
2. She has __________ romantic music than you.
3. You own __________ records than he.
4. He possesses __________ CD’s than we.
5. We buy __________ classical music than they.
6. They purchase __________ radios than I.
7. I listen to __________ comedy on the radio.
8. We watch __________ comedy shows on TV.
9. I like __________ violence on TV.
10. He prefers __________ villains in the movies.

Practice D. Complete each blank with MANY or MUCH as appropriate.

1. Debbie has as __________ cassettes as I do.
2. He enjoys as __________ shows as you.
3. She has as __________ romantic music as I.
4. He knows as __________ chess as you.
5. He possesses as __________ chess boards as we.
6. They listen to as __________ trash on the radio as we do.
7. I listen to as __________ news reports as I can.
8. We watch as __________ comedy shows as possible.
9. He prefers as __________ loving couples as possible.
10. He has seen as __________ love displayed as I.

Optional Practice: Read aloud the completed sentences from both exercises on this page. Discuss them with a partner or in groups.