

Business English and Conversation

for the EFL-ESL Classroom

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.

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Layout : Black Angel Enterprises

Editing and Proofreading: Servitec

1st published by
Universal Publishers/uPUBLISH.com
USA • 2000

ISBN: 1-58112-712-X

www.upublish.com/books/aceituno.htm

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**
- ✓ **Reading**
- ✓ **Speaking**
- ✓ **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.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

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 screenwright, 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



PARTS OF SPEECH

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!

It also has an
ARTICLE : "a"

Are parts of speech important? **They are essential!** Without them, we don't have a language and we can't communicate.

PREPOSITIONS

Nouns

Pronouns

Adjectives

Adverbs

Verbs

Conjunctions

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.



READING AND CONVERSATION PRACTICE

Read, in pairs or individually, the following dialogue.

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.

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 _____.

Chapter 1

Nouns

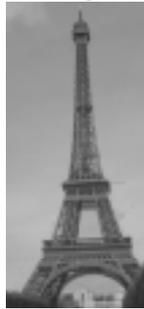
Nouns are the most common words in the language, because they **identify everything** that surrounds us.

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
Mexico
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



Conversation Tidbits ✓

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 and Common Nouns

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
2. ____ mother
3. ____ niece
4. ____ Ronald
5. ____ accountant
6. ____ Guatemala
7. ____ turkey
8. ____ McDonald's
9. ____ hippo
10. ____ mouse
11. ____ snow
12. ____ Denver
13. ____ box
14. ____ book
15. ____ Marie
16. ____ Beverly
17. ____ lion
18. ____ hospital
19. ____ Regional Hospital
20. ____ park

Optional Writing Practice: Write 5 common nouns and 5 proper nouns.

COMMON

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PROPER

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Singular Vs. Plural



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	control	controls
race	races	eye	eyes
farm	farms	boy	boys

Some nouns that end in “o” add “es”, while others add only “s”.

hero	heroes	tomato	tomatoes
patio	patios	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** box **boxes**
watch **watches** 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** cuff **cuffs**
chief **chiefs** roof **roofs**

We also find some nouns which have irregular plural forms.

child **children** ox **oxen**
man **men** woman **women**
mouse **mice** louse **lice**
tooth **teeth** foot **feet**
die **dice** fungus **fungi**
goose **geese** penum **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.



Conversation Tidbits



1



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?

2



3



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

die

fungus

pensive

update

mainframe

Indefinite Article "A"

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

an asterisk
an upgrade
an ugly man

an orange
an honest man
an apple

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

a diskette
a horse
a union

a tape
a united family
a university

a directory
a symbol
a keyboard

Practice A - Write “a” or “an” before each noun.

1. _____ outstanding boy
2. _____ account
3. _____ evening
4. _____ chat club
5. _____ night
6. _____ index
7. _____ e-mail
8. _____ assistant
9. _____ university
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?

			a						
			s						
			s						
			i	n	d	e	x		
			s						
			t						
			a						
			n						
			t						

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. **COUNT NOUNS**
She has fewer friends than we.

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

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

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

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.