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Introduction

The purpose of this book

This is a practical guide to common problems in English grammar and usage. It is written for foreign students who would like to know more about English, and who want to avoid mistakes.

Level

The book is written especially for intermediate students, but more advanced learners may also find it useful. The explanations are made as simple as possible. Students who want more detailed and complete information should read my more advanced book *Practical English Usage*, also published by Oxford University Press.

Language

Explanations are mostly in ordinary everyday English. It has been necessary to use some grammatical terminology (for example, *adverb*, *subject*, *clause*, *modify*). These words are explained on pages 10–12.

The kind of English described

The book describes standard modern British English, and gives realistic examples of spoken and written language (both formal and informal). Incorrect forms are shown like this: '(NOT *I have seen him yesterday*.)' There is some information about American usage, but the book is not a systematic guide to American English.

Organization

This is a dictionary of problems, not a grammar. Points are explained in short separate entries, so that you can find just the information you need about a particular problem — no more and no less. Entries are arranged alphabetically and numbered. A complete index at the back of the book shows where each point can be found. (There is also a list of all the entries on pages 5–9).