A Short Introduction to English Grammar

Grammar is the Art of rightly expressing our thoughts by Words.

Universal Grammar explains the principles which are common to all Languages.

The Grammar of any particular Language applies those common principles to that particular Language, according to the established usage and custom of it.

Grammar treats of Sentences and the several parts of which they are compounded.

Sentences consist of Words;
Words of one or more Syllables;
Syllables of one or more letters;
So that Letters, Syllables, Words and Sentences

make

make up the whole subject of Grammar.

In English there are twenty six letters viz. a. b. c. d. e. f. g. h. i. j. k. l. m. n. o. p. q. r. s. t. u. v. w. x. y. z. of which six vowels viz. a. e. i. o. u. y. the other twenty are consonants.

There are in English Nine Parts of Speech.

1. The Article prefixed to Substantives, when they are common names of things, to point them out and to shew how far their signification extends.

2. The Substantive or Noun, being the name of any thing conceived to subsist, or of which we have any notion.

3 The Pronoun, standing instead of the Noun.

4. The Adjective, added to the Noun to express the quality of it.

5. The Verb, or word by way of emineence signifying to be, to do, or to suffer.

6. The Adverb, added to Verbs, and also to

Adjectives

Adjectives and other Adverbs, to express some circumstance belonging to them.

7. The Preposition, put before Nouns and Pronouns chiefly to connect them with other Words, and to shew their relation to those Words.

8. The Conjunction, connecting sentences together.

9. The Interjection, thrown in to express the affection of the Speaker, though unnecessary with respect to the Construction of the Sentence.

Example

1. 2. 7. 2. 5. 1. 2. 4.
The power of Speech is a faculty peculiar
7. 2. 8. 5. 5. 7. 3. 7. 3.
to Man and was bestowed on him by his
4. 2. 7. 4. 8.
beneficent Creator for the greatest and
6. 4. 2. 4. 6. 6.
most excellent ures, but alas! how often
5. 3. 5. 3. 1. 4. 7. 2.
do we pervert it to the worst of purposes!

In English there are but two Articles a, and the; a, becomes an, before a Vowel or a silent h,

A, is used in a vague sense to point out one

single

single thing of the kind, in other respects indeterminate;

The, determines what particular thing is meaned, therefore the former is called the Indefinite, the latter the Definitive Article.

It is proper also to observe that a, determines the thing spoken of to be of the singular number, and the, of the Plural.

There is one remarkable exception to this rule in the use of the Adjectives few, and many, which though joined with the Plural substantives admits of the singular Article, a few Men, a great many Men; the reason of this is evident from the effect the Article has in these phrases, it means a small or great number collectively taken, consequently gives the idea of Unity.

The

The English Language is perhaps of all the present European Languages the most simple in its form and construction, and even more so than the Hebrew which has ever been admitted to possess that excellence in a very superior manner over all the other Antient Languages extant.

The Words of the English Language are perhaps subject to fewer variations, from their original form, than those of any other Language.

Its Substantives have but one variation of case, nor have they any distinction of Gender besides that which nature hath made.

Its Adjectives admit of no change except that which expresses the degrees of Comparison.

Its Verbs cannot have above six or seven

possible

possible variations from their original form; whereas in many Languages they amount to some hundreds; and almost the whole business of Modes, Times, and Voices, is managed with great ease by the assistance of Eight or Nine little Verbs called from their use Auxilliaries.

The Construction of this Language is so easy and obvious, that our Grammarians have thought the giving a regular and systematical Syntax scarcely necessary.

To this and the neglect of examining into the Rules upon which the Language is framed, arises the general practice both of Speaking and Writing it inaccurately, not to any irregularity or difficulty in the Language itself.

Substantives are of two Sorts; Proper and Common Names;

Proper Names are such as are appropriated to individuals, as the names of persons and places, such are Thomas, London.

Common Names stand for kinds, or containing many Sorts, or Sorts containing many Individuals, as Animal, Man, which are applied also to Individuals by adding to them articles as we have shewn before.

Proper Names admit neither of Articles nor of the Plural Number unless by a figurative expression, as when conveying the idea of a great Conqueror one may with elegancy say an Alexander, or the Alexander of the age or the Thames, that is the River Thames.

In English, the Substantive singular is made Plural for the most part by adding to it an s, or es, where necessary for the Pronunciation; as King, Kings, fox, foxes leaf, leaves, in which last and many other the f is changed into a v, to ease the pronunciation, and soften the sound.

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The power of speech is a faculty peculiar to Man and was bestowed on him by his beneficent Creator for the greatest and most excellent ases, but alas! how often do we pervert it to the worst of purposes!

The Article is a word prefixed to Substantives to shew far their signification extends.

In English there are but two Articles, a, and the, a becomes an before a Vowel or a silent h.

a is used in a vague sense to point out one single thing of the kind, in other respects indeterminate, the determines what particular thing is meant. Therefore the former is called the Indefinite, the latter the Definite Article.

A Substantive without any Article to limit it, is taken in its widest sense, thus Man means all mankind.

The definitive Article the is sometimes applied to Adverbs in the Comparative and Superlative degree, to mark them the more strongly & to define them the more precisely as the more I examine it the better I like it. I like this the least of any.

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