

ACT Grammar Prep Learnstrong.net Video Lectures

Lecture 2: Introduction to Grammar Study:

1. Welcome to the second lecture: what IS grammar?
 - a. Note the foolishness of saying “I hate grammar!”... you don’t say “Hate I grammar!”... you have to use grammar to say you hate grammar!
 - b. What you hate (maybe) is the study of grammar... NOT grammar
 - c. But what IS grammar?
2. The language of our study: different words get used and hairs get split by grammarians:
 - a. Syntax
 - b. Usage
 - c. Grammar
3. A working definition: The rules of spoken or written language
4. The two kinds of grammar:
 - a. Informal:
 - i. Small groups...
 - ii. rules vary and change quickly over time...
 - iii. “Groovy!”
 - iv. Can I go the bathroom?... I don’t know can you?....
 - v. Ain’t...
 - b. Formal:
 - i. Rules are standardized...
 - ii. academic understanding of how language should be spoken...
 - iii. this changes very slowly... the distinction between who and whom might be dropping out... other examples?
5. Our project here is to work with ACT prep so our study will be the academic rules of written English (NOT spoken... but there might be some carry over)
6. Why is this stuff so difficult?
 - a. A history of the formal study of English begins with a formal study of Greek and Latin
 - b. Both of those languages have 8 parts of speech
 - c. When English became a respectable language (to be studied by academics)... it HAD to have also 8 parts of speech... which is why “Wow!” (interrogative) is considered a part of speech!... ha
 - d. The traditional 8 parts of speech: (Some call it 9 with the Article!!!)
 - i. Noun
 - ii. Pronoun
 - iii. Verb
 - iv. Adjective
 - v. Adverb
 - vi. Conjunction
 - vii. Preposition
 - viii. Interjection

- e. English teachers like to make this study appear more difficult than it is... let's prove that in this series of lectures... (like anything of course... our study CAN get more complicated... but why?... only if you want to someday teach this stuff should you worry about getting into the weeds!)
 - f. Let's focus on JUST the essentials... so we can do well on the ACT and write better...
7. Everything about written English grammar is built off the understanding of the sentence.
 - a. How it looks:
 - i. Capital letter... string of words... end punctuation...
 - ii. The assumption is that what happens in between IS a sentence
 - b. How it reads:
 - i. For it to be a complete sentence (in formal grammar) there must be two parts of the sentence...
 - ii. Some thing (a noun... a subject)
 - iii. Doing something (a verb...a predicate)
 8. We MUST have both parts to make sure we have a sentence!
 - a. There REALLY are only 2 parts of speech... NOT 8!
 9. Sometimes the THING in the first part is "fuzzy" (unclear)... that we call a pronoun... we have to identify the antecedent (that which comes before)... what THING we are talking about
 - a. "Give me that!"
 - b. "Isn't he/she amazing?"
 - c. In both cases... what are you talking about?... some THING... that we call an antecedent
 10. Sometimes we want to clarify what THING we are talking about
 - a. These we call modifiers
 - b. Adjectives
 11. Sometimes we want to clarify what the DOING (verb) is doing:
 - a. These we call modifiers too
 - b. Adverbs (we add to the action of the verb)
 12. Sometimes we want to connect ideas so we use conjunctions
 13. Sometimes we want to explain place so we use prepositions
 14. Sometimes we want to add emphasis so we use interjections!
 15. Our goal is to learn the rules of each of these parts of a sentence and how they work... we want to pay attention to possible mistakes that can be made in the process.
 16. DON'T worry about the "WHY?" of the rules... (unless you want to study linguistics and language history!)... just learn the rules and how they work!
 17. We'll begin with the THING... the noun and then the pronoun... Think of it this way: once you know about nouns and pronouns you are half way to being done with your study of English grammar!
 18. Our approach: I'll not be using a textbook technically... but I'll refer to any number of grammar practice books... for example: Barron's Grammar Workbook by George Ehrenhaft... I recommend this one for your study!