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# Phonetics, Traditional Grammar, and Transformational Grammar

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HONORS SPECIAL STUDY PAPER

presented to

Mrs. Chambliss

Lois Kirkpatrick

December 18, 1972

As a Music Major, I chose to study for my honors project, three facets of grammar that would be helpful in teaching public school music. These areas are phonetics, which will aid in the correct pronunciation of words used in singing and speaking, traditional grammar, which is essential for both oral and written communications, and a study in the new transformational grammar, to keep abreast with changing grammatical skills. Though somewhat related, these skills are best discussed separately.

## PHONETICS

In the field of music, phonetic symbols are widely used. Singers are trained in these skills to enable them to analyze the sounds on which poor tonal quality occurs and to help them sing the foreign words of many pieces of music.

Following is the phonetic alphabet representing the sounds found in American English and a familiar hymn illustrating the use of these phonetic symbols:

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>English Words</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>English Words</u>
CONSONANTS			
b	beg, tub	p	paper, damper
d	do, and	r	run, far
f	fan, scarf	s	send, us
g	grow, bag	t	toe, ant
ʃ	judge, enjoy	ʃ	shed, ash
h	hem, inhale	ç	cheap, each
k	kick, uncle	θ	thin, tooth
l	let, pal	ð	then, breathe
m	men, arm	v	vow, have
n	nose, sudden	w	wet, twin
ŋ	wrong, anger	ʒ	pleasure, vision
		z	zoo, ooze

Symbol

English

Symbol

English

VOWELS

a	father, odd	o	hope, old
e	make, eight	ɔ	sauce, off
æ	sat, act	u	truth, blue
i	fatigue, east	U	put, nook
ɛ	red, end	ə	about, second
I	it, since		

DIPHTHONGS

aɪ	sight, aisle
aʊ	now, owl
ɔɪ	coy, oil

# God of our Fathers

(Phonetics)

Ga da var fa ðarz hu zol mai ti hænd  
Lidz for ðin biu ti ol ða sta ri bænd  
ðv šai niŋ wərɪ dzin splen dər ərɪ ðə skaiz  
Aur gret fʊl soŋz bi for ðai ərɒn nə raiz

Fram wərz a larmz, fram de dli pe ste lents  
Bi ðai strɒŋ ar ma re vər šʊr di fens  
ðai tru ri li dʒən i nar har tsin Kris  
ðai baʊn tiəs gu dni snn ri šə sin pis

ðai luv di vain hæ ɒle də sin ðə pæst  
In ðis fri lænd bai ði ar la tiz cæst  
bi ðao ar u lər, gar diən gaɪd ænd ste  
ðai wɔrd ar lə ðai pæ ɒar ʊzən we.

A men

## TRADITIONAL GRAMMATICAL PROBLEMS

Grammar is the basis of written and spoken communication. Music is an elaborate form of written and spoken communication. In order to strengthen my ability in grammar, I studied traditional grammar rules, probably the most universally taught type of grammar.

In pursuing this study, a diagnostic test contained in the Individualized English Set H (Follett Publishing Company, Chicago) was taken. This set is designed to improve the writing and speaking of students through a group of materials that diagnose each student's personal problems in English, present instructional programmed exercises to overcome these problems, and finally, test the progress made by each student.

The Diagnostic Test makes it easy to determine which Programed Exercise Cards are necessary. Each of the eighty-eight questions tests the knowledge of a principle taught on the card of the same number. Three items are given in each question which indicates whether or not the student knows the principle or just made a lucky guess. If any parts are missed, the student would profit from doing the exercise, but the number of parts missed suggests how serious the difficulty is.

The Programed Exercise Cards, which each student works according to his needs, as revealed in the Diagnostic Test, provide instruction covering many problems students encounter in writing and speaking.

The first 24 of the 88 principles have to do with grammar

and usage, with particular attention to the choice of individual words: pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, and conjunctions.

Cards 25-55 deal with effective sentence structure and certain matters of style such as figurative language and euphony.

Cards 56-80 build inductively toward an understanding of the principles of punctuation.

Cards 81-88 concern italics, abbreviations, capitalization, and the use of numbers.

The Mastery Test parallels the Diagnostic Test and is of approximately equal difficulty. It serves to check the improvement of the student.

Programing, the method of teaching used by Individualized English, is a self-teaching, self-scoring device, developed originally by psychologists. Material is presented in a number of "frames," the first of which is very simple and obvious, since it refers to something that the student already knows or can answer readily from the clues presented. Later frames build inductively upon the first, toward whatever the goal of the exercise is. The student discovers immediately, through a self-scoring device (seeing the correct responses) whether each of the answers is correct or wrong. This immediacy of checking does away with persistent errors.

The programing of Individualized English differs from most other programs in that it adapts to individual needs. The student works only the cards teaching principles that he has not mastered. These he does in the order that will help him to correct the most basic difficulties first. Also, each exercise builds toward use of a basic principle. For each card,



sentences are written demonstrating the use of the information on the cards. The final frame on each card reads: Finish the following sentence as honestly and completely as you can: The most important thing that I have learned from this card is that... It forces the student to give a little thought to what has been covered; it is a quick review.

Following is a brief description of the information found on the cards <sup>about</sup> which the Diagnostic Test found me incompetent:

- CARD 3 The Predicate Nominative: It Was He  
It was he is preferable to It was him in formal usage.
- CARD 5 Possessives with Gerunds: Forms Before -ing Words  
In a sentence like Fred's knowing the answer was a surprise, I should use Fred's instead of Fred because I am really referring to the knowing rather than to Fred.
- CARD 6 Reference of Pronouns: Ten Pesky Little Words  
Pronouns such as he, him, she, her, they, them, it which, or that should be easily understood as to exactly what the pronoun means.
- CARD 18 Verb Agreement: The Class Is or the Class Are?  
Usually a collective noun like class or team takes a singular verb, but if the sentence refers to individuals, a plural verb is better. If all members of a group are doing the same thing, a word like committee takes a singular verb; if they are not, it takes a plural.
- CARD 24 Conjunctions: Accurate Use of Nor, While, Since, and As  
When I use while, since, or as, I should be sure that no misunderstanding is likely. I should use nor, not or, after neither.
- CARD 29 Squinting Modifiers: Caught in the Middle  
A modifier should not be placed in such a way that it seems to modify something on each side of it.
- CARD 33 Excessive Short Sentences: Combinations May Be Useful  
Instead of writing many short sentences, I should try to combine my ideas. I should combine short sentences by putting the main idea into an independent clause and the less important ideas into words, phrases, or clauses.
- CARD 36 Failure to Subordinate Properly: Emphasize the Main Idea  
In a complex sentence I should put the main idea into an independent clause and should subordinate less important ideas.

- CARD 38 Parallel Structure: In Comparisons and in Series  
In a comparison, I should use the same grammatical form for the things being compared. In a series, the items should be similar in grammatical form.
- CARD 39 Parallel Structure: With Linking Verbs and Correlative Conjunctions  
With linking verbs, I should use similar grammatical forms on both sides. I should have the same kind of grammatical form after or that I have used after either.
- CARD 40 Comparisons: Using As...As and Similar Expressions  
When I use as...as or one of the...if not the... in a comparison, I should finish telling who or what is being compared as quickly as possible.
- CARD 43 Faulty Omission: Necessary Parts of Verbs  
I should not omit verbs or parts of verbs that are needed for clarity.
- CARD 45 Too Many Clauses: Putting Sentences on a Diet  
I should often reduce clauses to phrases or to single words, especially if the meaning can be stated just as clearly in fewer words.
- CARD 46 Unnecessary Passive Voice: Tell Who Did What  
I should avoid overuse of the passive voice. Ordinarily I should tell who did what, not what was done by whom.
- CARD 47 The There Is Sentences: Sometimes a Weakling  
Although starting a sentence with there is is not wrong, I should avoid starting many sentences that way.
- CARD 48 Weak Sentence Endings: Fading into Nothingness  
I should avoid ending a sentence weakly. A preposition at the end often weakens a sentence.
- CARD 51 Trite Expressions: Almost as Old as the Hills  
If I cannot think of a fresh way to make a statement, straightforward language is preferable to trite expressions.
- CARD 52 Farfetched Figures: The Dangers of Hyperbole  
I should usually avoid greatly exaggerated figures of speech.
- CARD 53 Figures of Speech: Don't Mix Them  
I should try to avoid mixing the images in nearby figures of speech.
- CARD 54 Euphony: Avoiding Unpleasant Sounds  
Sentences should have a pleasant sound. I should avoid both rhyming and the annoying repetition of a particular sound.
- CARD 55: Jargon: Shapeless in the Fog  
I should usually avoid vague words like case and line. I should use words that have specific meanings and avoid roundabout expressions.

- CARD 68 The Apostrophe: To Show Omission  
In a contraction, an apostrophe goes where a letter or letters are left out. Words like o'clock contain apostrophes.
- CARD 70 The Apostrophe: In Unusual Plurals  
When I'm speaking of the name of a letter or of a word in a sentence, I use an apostrophe in the plural. Plurals of symbols or numbers are unusual because an apostrophe goes before the s.
- CARD 72 The Hyphen: Miscellaneous Uses  
Two words combined as one adjective before its noun should be hyphenated. Compound numbers like thirty-two are hyphenated to make them look more like one word. A hyphen is needed to show the difference between the words recover and re-cover. When I add a prefix, I should also add a hyphen if two or more of the same letters would come together and a hyphen would help the reader to understand.
- CARD 80 Quotation Marks: With Certain Titles  
I should use quotation marks around titles of short items. Titles of short stories go in quotation marks.
- CARD 38 Capitalization: In Sentences, Quotations, and Letters  
If the words in quotation marks are a sentence, I should capitalize the first words. In a letter, I should write Dear Mr. Jones and Yours truly. The first words after a semicolon isn't capitalized.

After taking the Mastery Test and recording the score for each question, the higher scores show improvement over the scores of the Diagnostic Test.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL GRAMMAR

To complete this study, I exposed myself to a sampling of Traditional Grammar. This is to acquaint me with the newer trends in grammar.

Transformational Grammar is a logical approach to sentence structure containing four main parts.

(1) Phrase structure - the concept of dealing with phrases rather than individual words, in essence, noun + adjective + modifier, as opposed to a single noun subject; verb + auxiliary + adverb, as opposed to a single verb predicate.

(2) Lexicon - A chart diagram containing basic word features: Pronunciation, meanings, and grammatical classifications.

(3) Morphemes - The concept that noun + morpheme = plural; verb + morpheme = verb tense.

(4) Transformations - Questions, statements, commands, and exclamations are formed from basic sentence transformations. Transformations are made by the rearrangement of individual phrases.

# Diagrammed Example

The dog is gone.

