

The Stewart
English Program

Book 2
Grammar Plus...

Donald S. Stewart



Grammar instruction is hard to find in schools these days, but this totally new approach results in immediate writing success. Every chapter immediately progresses from the grammar lesson, to applying the new skills to that night's writing assignment. This great writing course values grammar and brings it back to life for the 21st century.

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12. WRITING PATTERNS

Now that you have learned the pieces of the writing puzzle—parts of the sentence, parts of speech, phrases, clauses, and punctuation—it is time to put them all together. We will use two new terms to describe how a sentence is constructed.

Base clause: A base clause is a sentence, with a subject, a predicate, and maybe a few adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases along the way. It is the central grammatical unit, to which we will add free modifiers, as discussed in the next section.

We label a base clause by putting the number 1 at the beginning of it. Sometimes we refer to the base clause as a **Level 1**.

Free modifier: A free modifier is any word, phrase, or clause that is set apart from the base clause by some form of punctuation. It is called *free* because of its separateness from the base clause, and also because free modifiers (except for the adjective clause) are often free to move around in a sentence and appear in more than one location. We will label a free modifier as a **Level 2**, **Level 3**, and so on, depending on what it modifies. A Level 2 will modify something in the Level 1, a Level 3 will modify something in the Level 2. Together these form **Levels of Generality**. The Level 1 serves as the foundation, and each additional level further describes, explains, compares, or otherwise clarifies the idea expressed in the previous level.

Here are some examples that show how these levels of generality work together. You should be able to identify the grammatical structure of each free modifier.

- 1 He got back up quickly,
 2 blinking in the darkness,
 2 his mouth warm with blood.—Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*

- 1 I pedal furiously now,
 2 not because I want to catch up with them,
 2 but because this road is deserted and I want to reach a better road or
 highway as soon as possible.—Robert Cormier, *I Am the Cheese*

- 1 Sophie knelt up,
 2 her hands covered in earth,
 2 her hair awry, and
 2 an expression on her face that Penelope had never seen before.
 —Rosamunde Pilcher, *The Shell Seekers*

- 1 He is a poorly educated man,
 2 small,
 2 active,
 2 with his right leg off, and
 2 wearing a wooden stump which is worn away upon the inner side.
 —Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Sign of the Four”

- 1 Cordelia sits with nonchalance,
2 nudging me with her elbow now and then,
2 staring blankly at the other people with her gray-green eyes,
3 opaque and glinting as metal.—Margaret Atwood, *Cat's Eye*

- 1 Harriet Blacking was the dark presence in the school,
2 a rather small girl,
3 plump,
3 nearly neckless,
3 with dead-white skin and the thinnest nose Catherine had ever seen,
4 as thin as the blade of a pocketknife.
—Paula Fox, *The Moonlight Man*

If a free modifier is located within the base clause or another free modifier, we use the symbol / to show that there has been an interruption. We also label the interrupter with a / symbol after the level number. Here are some examples.

- 1 We went up the riverbank, / , and threaded our way through a labyrinth of silver-grey boulders and rust-red anthills,
2/ falling into single file again
2 shaped variously like witches caps or the figures of kneeling giants or like trees without branches.—Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*

- 2 As he drew closer to the cry,
1 he went more slowly,
2 with caution in every movement,
2 till he came to an open place among the trees, and looking out saw, / , a long, lean, timber wolf.
3/ erect on haunches
3/ with nose pointed to the sky—Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

Here is a summary of the most common free modifiers.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. adjectives | 6. past participial phrase |
| 2. adverbs | 7. infinitive phrase |
| 3. prepositional phrases (often with <i>like</i>) | 8. adjective clause |
| 4. appositive | 9. adverb clause |
| 5. present participial phrase | 10. absolute phrase |

In Exercise A, be able to identify what each modifier is. In later exercises you will be asked to fill in your own free modifiers.

WRITING PATTERNS

Name: _____

EXERCISE A: levels of generality

Accuracy: _____

Directions: Lay out the following sentences by the numbers, as shown on the previous two pages, to indicate the “Levels of Generality,” indenting where necessary. There may be more blank lines for you to write on than there are levels, since some levels may need more than one line to write out. Do not include the title and author.

1. Portia, waiting for Eddie as she had often waited, turned her fists round slowly in her pockets, regretting that he should have been called away just now. — Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*

2. I’ve been walking for hours it seems, down the hill to the downtown, where the streetcars no longer run. — Margaret Atwood, *Cat’s Eye*

3. The captain soon knuckled under, put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like a beaten dog. — Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*

4. Just as Mr. Summers left off talking and turned to the assembled villagers, Mrs. Hutchinson came hurriedly along the path to the square, her sweater thrown over her shoulder, and slid into place at the back of the crowd. — Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery”

5. Ralph stood now, one hand against an enormous red block, a block large as a mill wheel that had been split off and hung, tottering. — William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

6. After a little while Mr. Gatz opened the door and came out, his mouth ajar, his face flushed lightly, his eyes leaking isolated and unpunctual tears. — F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

7. It was nearly nine o'clock when Squealer made his appearance, walking slowly and dejectedly, his eyes dull, his tail hanging limply behind him, and with every appearance of being seriously ill. — George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

8. Ursula's blanket — or, rather Julian's old army blanket — was folded, palletlike, in the corner of the hut, just as it had been when I first surprised her lying on it, trying to read her book. — Gail Godwin, *The Finishing School*

9. He stood patiently in front of her, as he had stood in front of the lieutenant, listening. — Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*

10. Deborah had looked about and found that she could not see except in outlines, gray against gray, and with no depth, but flatly, like a picture. — Hannah Green, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*

7. 1 One by one the marathon runners, / , crossed the finish line.
2/ _____ but _____
(adjective) (adjective)
8. 2 _____ and _____,
(adverb) (adverb)
3 _____,
(comparison)
- 1 he unscrewed the cap.
9. 1 She browsed through the Travel Section of the Sunday newspaper,
2 _____,
(present participial phrase)
3 _____.
(appositive)
10. 1 I'm running out of time to finish my project,
2 _____,
(appositive)
2 _____.
(adverb clause)
11. 2 _____,
(present participial phrase)
1 the ambassador extended her hand toward the consul,
2 _____.
(adjective clause)
12. 1 They told us to form two lines,
2 _____ and
(appositive)
2 _____.
(appositive)
13. 1 I sat quietly in the waiting room,
2 _____,
(present participial phrase)
3 _____,
(adjective clause)
4 _____.
(adverb clause)

20. 2 _____ ,
(infinitive phrase as adverb, telling why)

3 _____ ,
(adjective clause)

1 the School Committee met far into the night.

21. 1 The baby loved the new toy,
2 _____ ,
(appositive)

3 _____ ,
(past participial phrase)

4 _____ .
(comparison)

22. 2 _____ ,
(appositive)

2 _____ ,
(appositive)

2 _____
(appositive)

1 –everything was finally packed for our cross-country camping trip.

23. 2 _____ and
(past participial phrase)

2 _____ ,
(present participial phrase)

1 the puppy looked mournfully up at me,

2 _____ .
(present participial phrase)

24. 2 _____ ,
(adverb clause)

3 _____ ,
(adjective clause)

1 the florist trimmed off the dead leaves and snipped the bottoms of the stems.

25. 1 The sprinter settled into the starting blocks,
2 _____ ,
(adverb clause)

2 _____ .
(adverb clause)

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