

# A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR

**James Sledd**

"For a grammarian who believes that English grammar should be an important part of general education and that teachers of English who know little grammar are likely to teach badly, the general direction in which he should move is clear: the conventional schoolroom grammar is defective and must be brought more nearly in line with the principles and methods of contemporary linguistics. The movement in this direction is already too strong to be resisted, even if resistance were wise. Yet the schoolroom tradition is the only grammatical tradition which many teachers, students, and citizens now know; it is not totally false or misguided; and since contemporary linguistics is not monolithic but various, alive, and changing, no one can offer a new description of English as a grammatical faith in which the untutored may finally and safely rest.

From all this, it seems to me to follow that a number of interim textbooks are needed to prepare for some future text which might enjoy a general success in the English classroom.

My *Short Introduction* is, then, another attempt at a workable transition from old to new grammar for students in colleges and universities. It preserves as much of the schoolroom tradition as I thought possible — not enough for thorough-going traditionalists, too much for many linguists.

Perhaps it might be said that if this grammar is more traditional than most like it, it is also in some respects more independent: if it is bad, it is bad in its own way. Everywhere in the book, current linguistic doctrines, like the traditional pronouncements, are treated as hypotheses to be tested, not as ultimate truths. The reader must judge for himself the success or failure of the combination of old and new. He will find in Chapter Seven, "A Glossary of Grammatical Terms," direct statements of many relations between the analysis in this book and the schoolroom tradition."

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