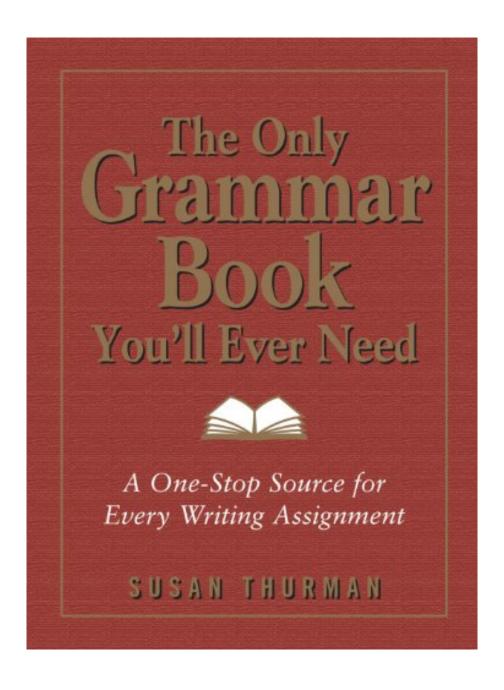


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By RACHEL B.

This book is too short to cover all of the topics and does not go into enough detail It is condensed. I would suggest purchasing The McGraw-Hill Book of English Grammar and Usage, along with this book and workbook, should you need more explanations on some of the topics. The McGraw-Hill Book even provides tests you can use if you are uncertain of the different types of speech. However, I will say that the commonly misspelled words in this book is more comprehensive than any other grammar books I've taken a look at recently. The workbook also provides a lengthy test of commonly misspelled words, which I found very helpful. If you want to get even deeper into the subject and and are interested in word usage and style and editing, don't forget to take a look at Strunk & White's "The Element of Syle" and then move onto June Casagrande (I would suggest "The Best Punctuation Book Period."). Every author has something to add. This is by no means the only grammar book you will ever need, but it will help guide you and provide a helpful start. Oh, and then there's a few more on proofreading and editing books if you want to brush up your skills. I did like this one; however; as I noted earlier, it provides a long list of the most commonly misspelled words, and believe me, they are up-to-date. I just thought that the textbook with explanations is too short if you are planning on reading some of the copyeditors' books at length.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

All Over the Place but Beholden to None

By Brent D. Tharp

My greatest complaint about this book is that it tries to do too much. It's supposedly a concise book that one can use to quickly find answers about grammar. I found the sequencing disorderly and confusing, and many of the descriptions used are flat-out wrong (in professional writing and editing, anyway), confusing, or simply irrelevant/unhelpful. The problem is that often the description is useful, but the example given is so incredibly bad that one wonders if they missed something. Nope—it's just a terrible example. For instance, in the section on plural possessives, the author correctly points out that plural possessives are usually formed with an apostrophe but not 's' on the end. Then she gives an example "trick" to help the reader find the plural in this sentence: "The girls jackets were left in the coatroom." The "trick" is then to turn the sentence around so that it reads "The jackets of the girls were left in the coatroom." NOW you know that "girls" is plural. Really? All that noise related only tangentially to the actual point—how to punctuate plural possessives, NOT how to find plural nouns (as if finding the word with the "s" on the end is like divining water or casting magic spells). My guess is that readers will be more rather than less confused after reading this section.

Meanwhile, the author adds sections about predicates, gerunds, and similar concepts that most beginning students will find quite difficult to understand because they are more nuanced than simple subject—verb constructions. She's all over the map in terms of who this book is intended for.

I understand the book was published some time ago, but several discussions about layout and style may not be completely wrong, but are definitely ill-advised. For instance, do we really want to teach writers that there is such a thing as a "compare-and-contrast" paper? Talk about redundant. Professional writers and editors do not use "compare and contrast," because they recognize that comparing includes contrasting by definition. And the whole "five-paragraph" essays smacks of the worst of what we teach students and businesspeople. Such an approach to writing is redundant, overwrought, and wordy as hell. Good writing does not need to repeat itself twice to make a point.

And finally, from a personal standpoint, having someone else read and provide feedback to your writing is not always "peer editing." Often it is simply editing. To assume the person reviewing the work is a peer is a stretch; and besides, if you're a beginning writer, do you really want one of your peers to be your reviewer/editor?

Get Bryan Garner's MODERN ENGLISH USAGE or his book on grammar published by University of Chicago Press (not CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE but rather the smaller yellow book on grammar). Though longer books, they are way more accessible, better organized, and provide better and more concise examples that normal people can actually understand.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Easy, pleasant, and EFFECTIVE book

By J. Balao

This is the first grammar book that I actually read all the way through. Prior to this, I didn't even know what adverbs or conjunctions are.

I had an English teacher say my writing is perfect. Off course it's not, but I was happy because it's my first time receiving such compliment.

I learned from this book that English is actually easy and pleasant to learn if you have a great teacher like Susan Thurman. I can't remember struggling at all, and I actually had a pleasant time.

So I recommend this book fellow ESL who want to brush up their grammar for their career or personal benefits.

After this book, if you like to improve your grammar to the next level, there are other simple, direct, and fun books I recommend: The Blue Book of Grammar by Jane Strauss and Beyond Prepositions by Thomas Celentano.

The Blue Book has lots of rules not covered in Thurman's book (and vice versa). Thurman's and Strauss' books compliment each other. But these two books don't cover the actual prepositions because you'd need about 100-200 pages for it.

Just like the two grammar books I mentioned, Celentano's Beyond Preposition is simple, easy, and pleasant to read.

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