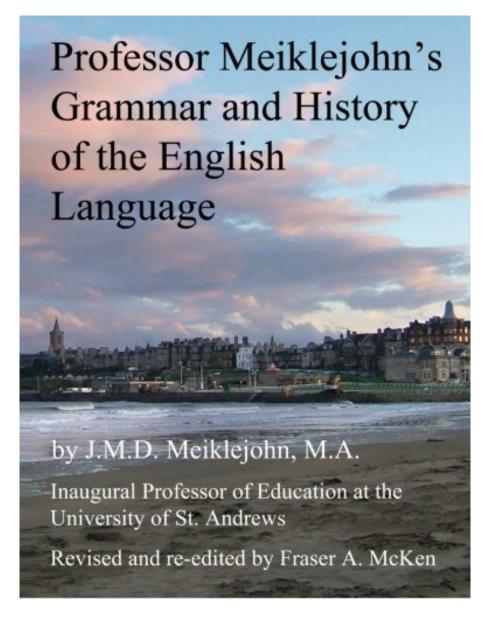


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About the Author

In 1854 at the age of twenty-four, John Miller Dow Meiklejohn translated Immanuel Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" into English and it would remain the standard translation for many years. However, it was in another area of Victorian writing that Meiklejohn's name would become celebrated. He wrote and published the most comprehensive set of schoolbooks, lesson materials and instructional texts for schoolmasters yet seen in an English-speaking classroom. Foremost and longest lasting among those books was "The English Language: its Grammar, History and Literature" (1886), which reached over thirty editions in Britain, the U.S.A. and the British Commonwealth. This revised edition marks the 125th anniversary of its first publication by Blackwood and Sons in London. The book was intended to provide novice teachers with a more complete understanding of the English Language. From this book they could then create their own lessons for their own students. Modern teachers of English worldwide have a similar requirement and it is the aim of this modern edition of the book to help them obtain it.

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This is an important book for teachers of English, particularly those just starting out, who require further knowledge about how English is structured, where it came from and how it's used for both speech and writing tasks all over the world. What newly trained teachers of English learn from this book can be readily selected and organized into their own students' lessons. The book helps with many important tasks, including: - learning how, in a clear fashion, the English language is used; - easy-to-understand examples included with each new lesson; - definitions and explanations throughout the book provided at the time they're needed; - excerpts taken from English literature to explain and demonstrate rules of English grammar; - the same patterns of speech shown in other languages the students or their teacher may have previously studied; - familiar English sayings and expressions, as well as many from other languages which have entered the English language; - two indexes provided: one at the start of the lessons on English grammar and one after them; - constant cross-referencing of difficult terms so that students can learn to recognize and remember the terms when they see them again; - and finally, over fifty pages of meaningful exercises, each of them indexed to the English language lesson from which they originate. Learn about how English originated among a small population to become the world's leading language of business and commerce. Using the now familiar "writing process", be guided to write and speak clear English sentences and how to construct an essay or report. Written originally in 1886 by Professor John Miller Dow Meiklejohn (1830-1902), founder of the education department of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, "The English Language: Its Grammar, History and Literature" (1886) was a book which had widespread popularity among newly trained teachers all over the world in the 19th and early 20th C. whose knowledge of English was incomplete. The book reached over thirty-five editions in the British Isles, the British Commonwealth and the United States and was the preferred text for student teachers for its understated tone and approach to English instruction. I have revised and re-edited the book and, in addition to presenting it on Amazon Books, I have also created a web site to advertise and market it: www.jmdmrevision.com. The web site offers a free, downloadable .pdf version of the new book, including introduction, a table of contents, a description of the original author and highlight passages of the revised text. In thirty-two years of teaching English to high school students, I never found a more useful instructional text from which I could create my own lessons and completed my own revision of the book soon after retirement, in hopes that the same helpful influence it had on student teachers in 1886 would be repeated in 2012, when the new book was released. A visit to www.jmdmrevision.com may help explain why that was so! - Fraser McKen

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The Ultimate Teacher's Guide to English Usage

By Liz Spence

As a former English major and ESL teacher I have long felt that the generation following mine was poorly equipped to teach English grammar to mainstream or ESL students. The students of the seventies and eighties (when the teaching of grammar was sorrily lacking) were themselves missing many of the basics necessary to impart the historically correct principles of this complex language to others. Although I understand that languages constantly evolve as new or previously unacceptable words and phrases become common parlance, it is still important for teachers to have a solid grounding in basic terminology and in grammatical and syntactic rules. This is especially true for those teaching ESL, as many students' native language is based on entirely different structures.

Enter Fraser's new book, a revision and expansion of the grammar and history of the English language. As complete and comprehensive study of its development and usage would be hard to find. It is logically organized, exhaustive in its scope and full of clear, often colourful examples of the point being made. His section on word branching, including many words that have their roots in Latin, Greek or other antique tongues, can be very useful for students studying advanced English, where the root can be transferred to form or recognize other words encountered. Even the story of the evolution of Modern English is itself of interest. This tome is probably too exhaustive for ESL students to plough through. However, a teacher could use this book as his one go-to reference guide for any grammatical or syntactic question, and be assured that he has everything he needs at this source to impart the required knowledge to his students. I would call this book indispensable for your bookshelf. An admirable achievement!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A Useful Resource

By David

John Wayne says "He must be the Son of God."

The Director (George Sherman) says "Could you say it with awe?"

John Wayne says "Aw, he must be the Son of God".

In everyday parlance many things are described as "Awesome", or "Truly awesome". And along with a diminution of our vocabulary there seems to be an increasing tendency to ignore grammatical structures: for example "This just in"; "I'm like really there...".

All languages develop and change but the narrowing of vocabulary and the increasing reliance on ungrammatical and over-used slogans and phrases can make our language colorless and lacking in discernment.

Well written and spoken sentences provide a much more clear, accurate and precise meaning to the reader and listener and this is why Fraser McKen's book "Professor Meiklejohn's Grammar and History of the English Language" can be very useful to those who write and speak English.

The book is a renovation of Professor Meiklejohn's original work, first published in 1886. McKen has brought this book into the twenty-first century by updating the grammatical usage and by expanding many of the concepts and examples.

McKen's book meets the needs of four different audiences.

Firstly the book can be used by students who are learning English. The rules of grammar are clearly explained with an abundance of examples and applications. Non-English speakers often find the English language to be confusing and contradictory where the rules seem to be applied in an arbitrary and conflicting manner.

Thus when such English learners have questions about verbs matching nouns they can find the answers in the McKen/Meiklejohn book. The book is also an excellent background resource for such learners. For example, Meiklejohn clearly demonstrates the different ways that gender can be denoted and gives the origin of such terms.

The second audience is teachers of English. Any question about the origin or development of a word or a syntax can usually be answered. English teachers can be confident they can answer whatever question about language that their students can pose. For example, a common question asked of an English teacher relates to the use of "that" or "which" as a conjunction: another puzzle for students of English when to use a plural verb when the subject it a collective noun, like "committee" or "herd". McKen lucidly resolves these questions.

The book is also useful to those linguists who are interested in studying the structure and development of English in depth, including those who study the structure of poetry, "prosody". Meiklejohn illustrates the development of English vocabulary and grammar through different periods and discusses landmarks that have occurred at specific times. This includes a discussion of the influences of Norman French and different types of Latin.

Lastly, the book is full of interesting facts that would be eagerly devoured by "knowledge junkies", those of us who enjoy crosswords and similar puzzles. For example, we often think of the King James Bible as an example of mainly 17th century English, whereas most of the language used was based on 16th century structure and usage.

Although the book can meet the needs of various audiences, there is often no demarcation between the needs of a new English learner and those of a more knowledgeable reader. Thus an explanation of active and passive verbs leads to an extensive discussion of various verb types and tenses; a new English learner may not be looking for such a detailed discourse.

The book belongs on the shelf of an English Teacher or Professor. It is a valuable tool in the teaching and study of English.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The world needs this book.

By E. M. Lake

It's my hope that teachers will use this book well before high school. As far as I know most teenagers are totally unaware of terms as simple as verb, noun, subject, object.

As for verbal use has anyone listened to the CBC lately? Even the venerable Globe and Mail needs this book. Let's hope we all benefit from the work of Mr. McKen. Bravo.

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