

To the Teacher

The purpose of a grammar book for English language learners (ELLs) is to help our students acquire the patterns of English. Simply put, grammar is nothing more than patterns. Some of these patterns are relatively easy (e.g., adjectives precede nouns), while others are more difficult (e.g., prepositions or articles). To help our students acquire these patterns, the four books in the *Clear Grammar* series feature a unique combination of useful grammar information written in simple language with activities that promote more accurate and fluent writing, speaking, reading, and vocabulary.

Clear Grammar 4 offers students and teachers solid presentations of grammar information and useful practice activities for lower-advanced students. It is part of a four-volume corpus-informed series of grammar books for all levels of students of English as a second or foreign language. Book 4 covers grammar points for lower-advanced non-native speakers of English, including noun clauses, adverb clauses, past perfect tense, and conditionals.

Clear Grammar 1 begins the series with basic grammar points, such as simple present and simple past tenses, count and non-count nouns, and prepositions. *Clear Grammar 2* continues with grammar points such as irregular past, articles, and modals. *Clear Grammar 3* continues with grammar points such as phrasal verbs, passive voice, infinitives vs. gerunds, and adjective clauses.

Clear Grammar 4 contains exercises that provide relevant practice in basic grammar points for ELLs at the lower-advanced/advanced level. It assumes that students have knowledge of basic English grammar, including simple sentence structure and verb tenses (past progressive, present perfect, future) and modals. It is designed to be used by adult learners—high school age and up. It is suitable for either intensive or non-intensive programs.

Important features of all four new editions of *Clear Grammar* include:

1. clear grammar explanations with user-friendly charts
2. a grammar discovery task using students' inductive learning skills
3. a large number of activities (about 190 in this book), as well as a wide variety of activities (fill in the blank, sentence completion, scrambled sentences, matching, error ID, editing, original writing, reading, and vocabulary)
4. many more grammar activities at the longer discourse level
5. corpus-informed vocabulary items connected to a unit's target grammar
6. reading skills: each unit includes a critical reading activity and a sentence-reading exercise in which the target grammar is featured
7. writing skills: each unit concludes with two writing activities, one on editing student writing and the other for original student writing
8. vocabulary quizzes: each unit includes at least two vocabulary reviews, one of which focuses on collocations

9. communication skills: each unit includes one to five speaking activities that require students to speak and listen to each other while using the target grammar
10. online extra practice activities that are indicated within each unit

The books in the *Clear Grammar* series have eight main goals:

1. to teach the basic grammar points necessary for ELL students
2. to expose students to a substantial amount of useful, high-frequency, corpus-informed vocabulary that is related to the grammar point being studied, including words, phrases, and idioms
3. to provide ample written practice in these structures at the multi-sentence and dialogue levels
4. to provide practice at varying cognitive levels (i.e., not just rote grammar knowledge and comprehension but also synthesis and evaluation)
5. to engage ELLs through a variety of activities and games
6. to improve students' writing, speaking, reading, and listening
7. to provide ample opportunities for students to check their progress while studying these structures
8. to serve as a grammar reference that is written with language and terms that an ELL at the upper-intermediate or advanced level can understand without teacher assistance

The units may be done in any order. However, it is recommended that the general sequencing of the units be followed whenever possible. An attempt has been made to recycle material from one unit into following units where appropriate. For example, once past tense for irregular verbs has been covered, many of the sentences in subsequent exercises in other units include irregular past tense for further reinforcement.

Although a great deal of variety of material exists in the book, there is a general pattern within each unit.

If you see a key in the right margin in a grammar lesson, it means that this grammar point is featured as one of the 15 keys in *Keys to Teaching Grammar to English Language Learners* by Keith Folse (2009).

Unit Organization

1. **Discover Grammar Task.** In many grammar classes, the teacher simply presents the grammar lesson to the students. Another effective technique is to involve the students in an inductive grammar discovery task that begins each unit.

Students work together to read a short passage or conversation of one to two paragraphs that are rich in examples of the target grammar and then answer a series of questions about the structures in the text. These questions focus on grammar and meaning.

Students may or may not be able to actually figure out the grammar issue, but this creates a teachable moment in response to the learners' need to know. Your goal is to pique the students' curiosity about the lesson's grammar. After complet-

ing the task in their books, students should discuss their answers as a class before beginning the actual lesson. Some students are better able to remember information that they themselves have worked with, so involving students in this kind of discovery task may ultimately benefit their learning.

2. **Grammar Presentation Charts.** Simple, easy-to-follow charts explain the target grammar, which often features corpus-based vocabulary connected to the grammar point.
3. **List of Potential Errors with Corrections.** This section of the unit includes a list of several of the most common errors made by learners. Following each error is the corrected form so that students can see not only what they should avoid but how it should be corrected. Our students represent a wide range of linguistic groups, and every effort has been made to take this into account in selecting which kinds of errors to include here.
4. **Written (as opposed to Speaking) Exercises.** Teachers and students want a large number of written exercises to allow for ample practice of the newly learned structure. The exercises have been sequenced so that the early exercises require only passive knowledge of the grammar point. For example, students circle one of two answers or put a check mark by the correct word. These exercises are followed by others that are more cognitively demanding and require active production of the language structure. In this way, students can comfortably move from passive knowledge to active production of a structure.

The written exercises in this book are short enough to be done in a small amount of time, yet they are thorough enough to provide sufficient practice for the structure in question. These exercises may be done in class or as homework. Furthermore, they may be checked quickly either by individual students or by the class.
5. **Grammar at the Discourse Level.** As often as possible, the written exercises in this book consist of connected sentences related to a single topic, with the title of the material indicated just before the grammar activity. This connected discourse helps ELLs improve their overall English fluency while focusing on the target grammar items.
6. **Extra Online Practice.** After students have practiced a structure, they are directed to do corresponding interactive activities on the website that accompanies this series (www.press.umich.edu/elt/composite/cleargrammar/). Students record their scores for these activities in their books, which gives teachers who so desire an opportunity to see how students are doing on a particular grammar item.
7. **Mini-Conversations.** Instead of unconnected single-sentence exercises, this written exercise consists of dialogues that require students to recognize or use the target grammar in a broader context than single sentences.
8. **Editing.** Students need to become proficient at editing their own grammar. To that end, a special activity in each unit allows ELLs to be the judge of whether or not a given sentence does or does not contain an error with the target grammar items.
9. **Sentence Study for Critical Reading.** In this activity, students read a sentence that contains the target grammar and then must choose which of three sentences

that follow are true based on the information in the original sentence. To improve critical-thinking skills, one, two, or all three of the statements may be true, so students must read all three and carefully consider their veracity.

10. **Speaking Exercises.** Each unit has at least one interactive speaking activity that provides an opportunity for students to practice the grammar and build fluency.
11. **Two Review Tests.** Equally as important as the teaching of a given grammar point is the measurement of the learning that has taken place. Near the end of every unit are two review tests. These review tests have various kinds of questions to assess learners' ability in different ways.

Review Test 1 contains multiple choice questions. It is important to discuss not only why the correct answers are correct but also why the distractors are not correct. Review Test 2 is Production and Evaluation. Part 1 of this review test requires production of the grammar, usually through a fill-in-the-blank activity. Because editing grammar is such an important student skill, Part 2 requires students to edit material that contains typical ELL errors.

12. **Reading Practice.** This longer reading activity generally consists of 200–400 words of text followed by several comprehension questions. The target grammar has been underlined to reinforce students' knowledge and awareness of the grammar.
13. **Two Vocabulary Practices.** Grammar knowledge without expanding vocabulary knowledge is useless, so vocabulary must be practiced and learned. The units overtly present new vocabulary to help students increase their vocabulary as much as possible. To this end, two vocabulary practice activities help solidify students' knowledge of vocabulary.

Word Knowledge features 25–35 key words from the unit and two answer options. Students should select the one word that is clearly related to the target vocabulary word.

Collocations features 25–40 key phrases or word combinations that are used frequently. Here students choose the one word that best completes the phrase. Examples include *a _____ menu* with *sauce* and *special* as answer choices, and *in _____* with *fact* and *menu*.

14. **Writing Practice.** The writing practice at the end of each unit has two parts. Part 1 provides additional editing practice as students must edit a student writing sample according to a list of errors that have been identified. These errors represent the most typical ELL errors for this proficiency level and grammar point. In Part 2, students are to write a short assignment based on something similar to the passage written for Part 1. Teachers may elect to have their students write sentences or paragraphs depending on the curriculum in their program.
15. **One-Minute Lesson Notes.** A unique feature of this series is the inclusion of numerous student notes, which appear in two small shaded boxes in each unit. These notes contain important information on an array of language areas, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, capitalization, punctuation, and learning strategies, which teachers may discuss with the whole class or just point out to students for additional information.