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# MODERN ENGLISH

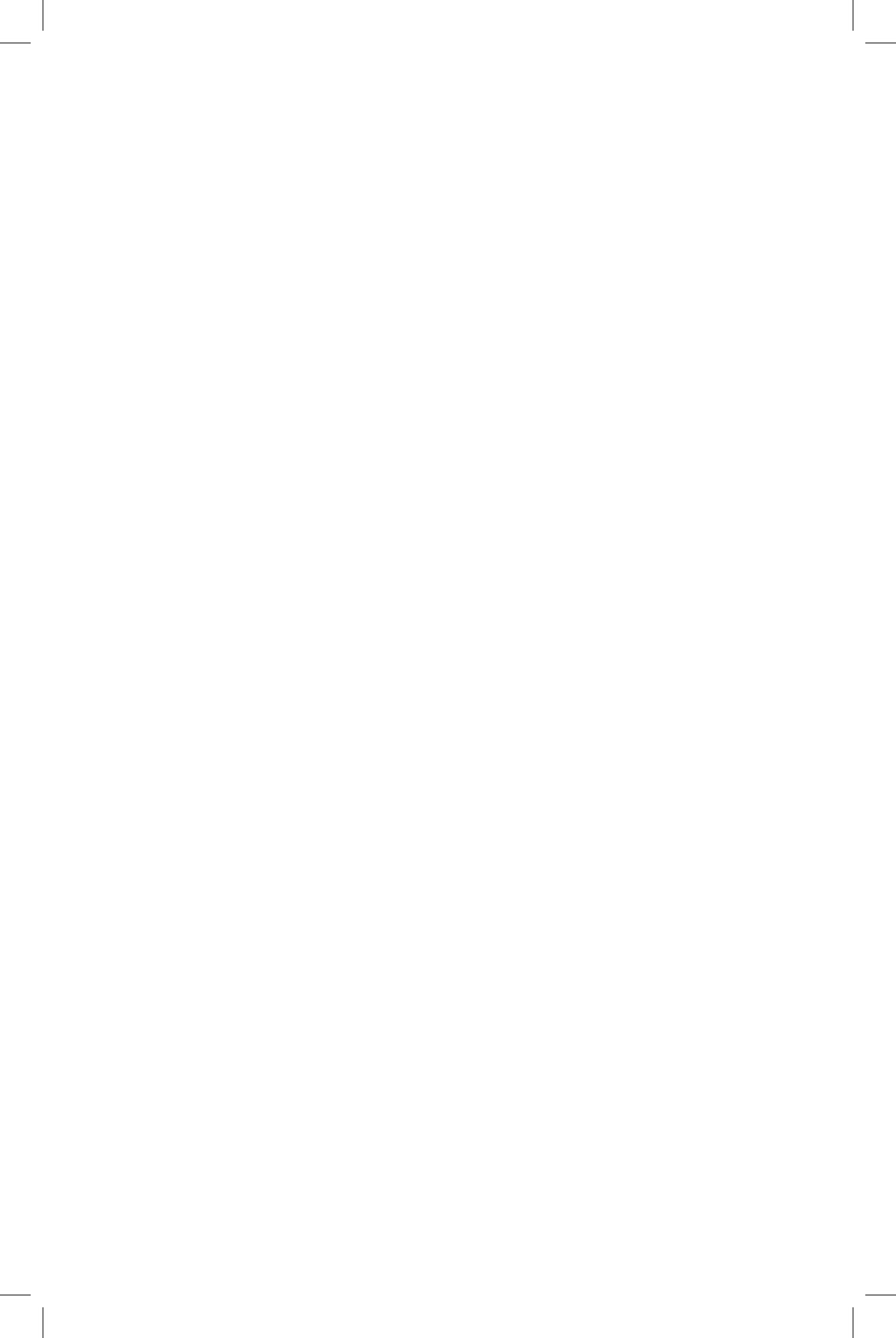
**A Book of Grammar  
Usage and Composition**

**N. Krishnaswamy**



# **Modern English**

**A Book of Grammar, Usage and  
Composition**



# MODERN ENGLISH

A Book of Grammar, Usage and  
Composition

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## MODERN ENGLISH

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## Opening Words

This book is an adapted version of **A GUIDE TO MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMAR, USAGE AND COMPOSITION**. It has been designed for undergraduate students. It is hoped that the book will meet the requirements now widely felt for teaching grammar. An attempt has been made in this book to bring together grammar and composition, and at every stage learners are asked to make use of the grammar they have learnt. The learning of grammar is an exercise in making generalizations and it becomes meaningful when the generalizations start functioning. In this book, both grammar and composition move from simple to increasingly complex patterns and learners are not asked to memorize and 'store' all the generalizations. This book represents a synthesis of traditional as well as modern grammar and the principles of teaching English. It has been tried to make the learning of grammar as enjoyable as possible. I would feel rewarded if the students feel the same when they have read the book.

**N.KRISHNASWAMY**

### ***About the Ruby Jubilee Edition***

I feel really rewarded now. I am glad that in the last fifty years this book—a pedagogical grammar of English written by an Indian has been found useful by many.

The Ruby Jubilee edition is placed in the market as a tribute to what we Indians can do.

I thank my publishers, Trinity Press (An Imprint of Laxmi Publications Pvt. Ltd.), for the sustained support given to me all these years. I think our collaboration has been very productive and useful.

**N. KRISHNASWAMY**

Former Professor, CIEFL, Hyderabad

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# 1

## Review: The Parts of Your Speech

### Read the following passage:

It is nine o'clock on Sunday morning. The weather is warm. We are in front of a house, on Pusa Road. Where is Pusa Road? It is in Delhi.

The house is a small one, with five rooms. There are two bedrooms, a living-room, a kitchen and a dining-room. There is a garden around the house with flower-beds, a lawn and two trees. This is Mr Sharma's house.

The Sharmas are a family of four and it is an interesting family.

Mr Sharma is a professor. He is an Indian; he is forty-five, and his hair is grey. His wife is Leela Sharma. She is forty years old but she looks very young. She is a housewife.

Vinod is their son. He is twenty years old. He is tall and thin, with long hair and looks like a hippie. He is a medical student.

Sita is his sister; she is seventeen. She is slim, pretty and smart-looking. Her hair is short and silky. She is in the living-room. She is in a bad mood but she is never angry for long. There is a telephone in the room.

### 1.1 Classification of Nouns

Look at the following words: 'Mr Sharma', 'Leela Sharma', 'Vinod', 'Sita', 'professor', 'son', 'hippie', 'road', 'hair', 'telephone'.

They are all names of persons, places or things. They are called *Nouns*. A noun is a word that denotes the name of a person, place, thing or idea.

There are several kinds of nouns.

Nouns may be classified on the basis of meaning or on the basis of form.

On the basis of meaning, nouns may be classified as Proper Nouns and Common Nouns.

The word 'Mr Sharma' refers to a *particular* person. It is the name of a particular person. Such words are called *Proper Nouns*. A proper noun is the name by which a particular person, place or thing is called. Proper Nouns are written with a capital letter at the beginning:

Mr Sharma, Sita, Delhi, Pusa Road.

The days of the week and months of the year are proper nouns, and they begin with a capital letter:

Sunday, Monday, January, February, etc.

Compare the proper nouns with words like 'professor', 'son', 'hippie', 'garden', 'lawn'. They do not refer to particular persons, places or things. They are called *Common Nouns*. A common noun is the name that is given to any one of a class or kind of persons, places or things.

If a common noun denotes a group of persons or objects of the *same kind*, it is called a *Collective Noun*. Collective nouns are group names: committee, team, crowd, flock, family, nation, army, navy, fleet, etc.

Common nouns that refer to materials or substances out of which things are made are called *Material Nouns*: gold, silver, iron, wool, wood, clay, etc.

On the basis of meaning, nouns may also be classified as *Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns*.

A concrete noun is a word that denotes something concrete, something that can be tasted, touched, or seen, something that exists physically: room, son, girl, boy, iron, gold, etc.

Proper nouns and material nouns are concrete nouns. But not all common nouns are concrete nouns; they may be concrete or abstract.

An abstract noun is a word that denotes something that is abstract. The thing denoted may be an idea or emotion; freedom, liberty, thought, joy, sorrow, love, death, goodness, kindness, childhood, admission, etc.

The names of disciplines are abstract nouns: grammar, logic, music, chemistry, etc.

Abstract nouns are considered ‘proper nouns’ when they are personified, i.e., when they are given human attributes: Freedom smiled down upon our nation.

### Exercise 1

Divide the nouns below into three groups: concrete nouns, abstract nouns and collective nouns.

Sand, group, courage, water, truth, wisdom, club, goodness, committee, loyalty, milk, class, iron, obedience, philosophy, lake, corn, toothpaste, honesty, poetry.

#### 1.2 Nouns: Number

On the basis of form, all common nouns are divided into Countable Nouns and Uncountable Nouns. Countable nouns can be divided into singular and plural because they have singular and plural *forms*. Singular means One; Plural means More Than One. The countable nouns denote things that can be counted. Uncountable nouns have no plural forms.

Look at the following forms:

##### *Singular Countable Nouns*

a student

a table

a dog

##### *Plural Countable Nouns*

students

tables

dogs

These are all countable nouns.

Look at the following words: milk, rice, ice, coffee, tea, ink, oxygen, liberty, justice, truth, beauty, democracy, iron, wool, money, honesty, gold, butter, water, air, history, economics, music, cricket, tennis.

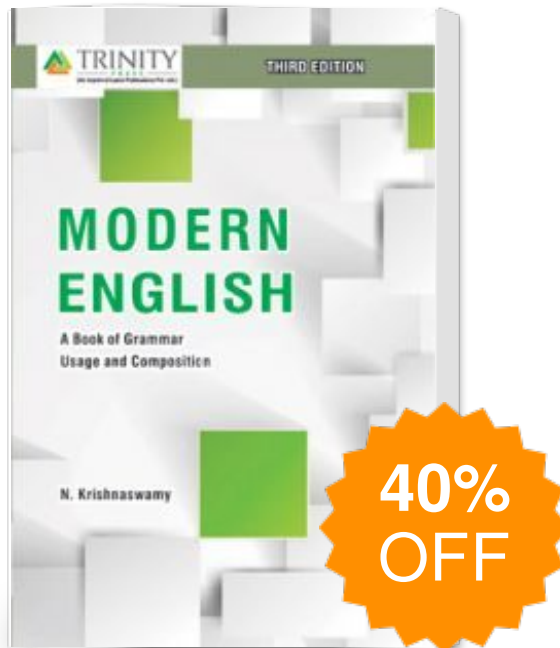
These are all uncountable nouns. They do not have plural forms, or, more accurately, they lack the singular/plural contrast.

Abstract nouns are mainly uncountable nouns and concrete nouns are mainly countable nouns. But many nouns can be used as countable nouns or uncountable nouns with considerable *difference in meaning*.

Notice the difference in meaning in the following pairs of sentences:

- (a) She is a *beauty*. (= a beautiful person; ‘beauty’ is used as a countable noun)

# Modern English A Book Of Grammar, Usage And Composition



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