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# Introduction

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It was the summer after my fourth year of teaching when I finally realized that I wasn't alone. Until that point, I had quietly grappled with a private classroom struggle so serious that I left teaching for a time in large part because of it, and if not for a Great Recession that left few other options, I'm not sure I would have returned.

The story behind the struggle was this: I sunk endless hours both in and out of the school day into writing instruction. I taught lesson after lesson about commas and clauses and parts of speech, carved out time to conference with students, and assigned lots of papers—papers that I spent a great many late nights, early mornings, and weekends marking and grading. I did this because the core reason I became an English language arts teacher was to help students find and refine their voices when it came to writing. I have since come to learn that a great many ELA teachers come into the profession because they love books, and while I love books, for me it was always about the power of writing—a power that, once realized, changed my own life—and a desire to help my students change their lives with that power too.

And yet at that point in my teaching career, my students weren't meeting the writing goals I held for them. I came into the classroom with visions of ultra-inspiring superteachers like those in *Dead Poets Society* or *The Great Debaters*, but my reality felt stuck in the opening sequence of a clichéd teacher-comedy movie: the part where students stare out the windows, with a look of unfathomable boredom painted across their faces, as the teacher drones breathlessly on and on and on at the front of the room.

At this point, I questioned whether I even could become an effective teacher, and so, in an effort to turn my writing instruction around, I sought out a writing instruction boot camp of sorts. I enrolled in the Oregon Writing Project and a graduate program focused on curriculum and instruction. By day I compared notes with other Writing Project teachers, and by night I dug into the history of composition instruction for my graduate work—and during this time, I realized that my quiet struggles and frustrations concerning writing instruction weren't what separated me

from other teachers. In reality, they were what connected me with the fellowship of writing teachers present and past—a fellowship that has long grappled with two well-established problems:

## **PROBLEM 1: STUDENT STRUGGLES WITH WRITING HAVE LONG BEEN THE NORM, NOT THE EXCEPTION.**

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There is little positive data when it comes to the writing trajectory of American students over the last half-century. The most concerning and also the most comprehensive data come from the Nation’s Report Card on writing, which has consistently found since the 1990s nearly three-quarters of fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders tested to have writing skills below the level of proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Further, the sparse measures we have of student writing trends show a nearly universal downward trajectory. For example, student scores on the SAT writing section during the decade when individual writing data were collected (2006–2016) did not rise once in that span, instead dropping eight of the ten years (Aldric, 2023).

## **PROBLEM 2: TRADITIONAL METHODS OF LANGUAGE AND WRITING INSTRUCTION—AND ESPECIALLY THOSE CONCERNING GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, AND STYLE—HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO BE MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE OR NOT EFFECTIVE AT ALL.**

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In 1963, Richard Braddock and colleagues published a National Council of Teachers of English report with a striking claim: “The teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing” (pp. 37–38). Research in the 60 years since has regularly supported this finding that many traditional approaches to language instruction don’t seem to move the needle on student writing in a meaningful way (Cleary, 2014). At first this all feels preposterous. How can learning more about something have little or no meaningful effect on one’s ability to do it? Yet the data—and the classroom experiences of many—are as clear as they are confounding.

Learning about these established issues made me feel at once in good company and in a good deal of trouble. It was a relief to learn that my struggles were not an indictment of me as a teacher, but the fact that these problems remained so omnipresent and entrenched called into question whether my goals were even possible. If the spring of my desire to teach was wanting to help young writers to find and refine their voices, how was I supposed to do that if so many of the practices that proliferated in my own experience and the pedagogical books I had on my shelf didn't work? Was the real key simply a matter of getting students to write more, or to do more reading so they could pick up language through osmosis? Or were there ways out there to teach about language and writing that actually work?

These questions both drove and haunted me that summer and throughout my graduate school experience, and so shortly after graduating I began a newsletter devoted to seeking answers to the problems concerning writing instruction. And now, after nearly a decade of writing that newsletter, I can say yes to everything above. Yes, writing more is essential, especially when we are mindful of the types of writing we ask of our students. Yes, the same is true for reading; students need to encounter many different voices to properly understand how to express their own voices. And yes, cultivating student writing identities and the writing cultures in our classrooms is crucial. Even still, I have come to find that a true key to better writing instruction—one that is critical if we want to build more equitable classes because nothing gets left to chance or osmosis—is also the one that is the most maligned in discussion of writing pedagogy: **direct instruction concerning grammar, mechanics, style, rhetoric, and everything else that fits under the wider umbrella of language.**



## Mentors and Models

While I love and deeply appreciate linguists, language theorists, and those who commit their working lives to exploring the gears, sprockets, nuts, and bolts of how language works, I am not one of them. I am instead a language-loving practitioner. I seek to offer a classroom view. For those who want a deeper study of the theory and research behind the topics and concepts covered, this book includes Mentors and Models boxes throughout as potential options for future study. I hope these boxes help with plotting the next steps in your own journey with teaching about grammar and language.

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Here, in no particular order, are the top five writing instruction books that have helped me the most in my near-decade of writing a newsletter on writing instruction pedagogy:

1. *The Confidence to Write: A Guide for Overcoming Fear and Developing Identity as a Writer*, by Liz Prather (2022)
2. *Writing Rhetorically: Fostering Responsive Thinkers and Communicators*, by Jennifer Fletcher (2021)
3. *Creating Confident Writers: For High School, College, and Life*, by Troy Hicks and Andy Schoenborn (2020)
4. *Why They Can't Write: Killing the Five-Paragraph Essay and Other Necessities*, by John Warner (2020)
5. *Poetry Pauses: Teaching With Poems to Elevate Student Writing in All Genres*, by Brett Vogelsinger (2023)

To understand why direct instruction is so important, let's first examine the "formal grammar instruction" methods that have underwhelmed in the 60 years since Braddock et al. (1963). One common issue with traditional grammar and language instruction is that it tends to be highly disconnected from the wider work of class. Instead, in most ELA classrooms, out of the blue one day, the students do a worksheet on semicolons or diagram some sentences to learn about prepositions and prepositional phrases. Then those concepts recede, never (or rarely) receiving mention again—hardly a recipe for long-term learning. Further, even if the lessons concerning semicolons and prepositions do reappear, they aren't regularly connected to the wider work of the class or the students' own writing, and for many students the gap between learning those concepts and using them is too big to bridge on their own.

Another common problem with traditional grammar instruction is that it doesn't make its value clear. I have seen many, many students actively or unconsciously question its purpose. They can naturally express themselves in speech and writing—often in interesting, impressive ways—without conscious knowledge of what they are doing, so why does it matter? And recent scholarship has also made clear just how unwelcoming traditional grammar and language instruction can feel to

students (Young et al., 2014). Many associate language lessons (sometimes rightly) as connected to negative judgments concerning how they speak and communicate. Given how personal our speech is to us, such feelings can poison an interest in learning more about grammar and language in school before it even begins.



## GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Language is so personal because we learn to speak by listening to the people and places that are the closest to us in the entire world: our family, friends, mentors, neighbors, and neighborhoods. We hear that language in our earliest days and weave it into a tapestry of syntax, pronunciations, and grammatical structures that is unique to just us. This might explain why students often have such a strong reaction to being told something about their language isn't correct.

By the time they enter our classrooms, many students also carry with them deep associations of frustration and boredom with all things grammar and language. The mere mention of the subjunctive or a coordinating conjunction can be enough to cause a thick glaze to appear over a great many students' eyes. When I ask students about these types of reactions, many express in one way or another what an impenetrable black box language is. They know that they can communicate without any instruction at all, but when it comes to instructions about how to communicate or where their communication comes from, the concepts rarely stick, and the picture never seems to come into focus.

These issues with grammar and language pedagogy are well documented and represent some of the thorniest and most intractable problems in ELA. But, to spoil the ending of this book, they are solvable. Every year students rate the grammar and language lessons in my classes—where we crack open the black box and pore over, pick apart, ponder, and play with what we find inside—as the most meaningful, most useful, and most enjoyable things we did. And in the process, the students grow comfortable and confident enough with language to begin finding and refining their voices in a way that they never did when I assigned diagrams and worksheets or simply ignored grammar and language lessons in favor of more reading and writing.

It is also worth noting that research has finally begun to recognize the powerful impact that thoughtful, modern grammar and language instruction can have on student writing growth. One of the most compelling pieces of this research is a recent update to one of the most widely cited reports arguing against grammar instruction, 2007's influential meta-analysis *Writing Next* by Steve Graham and Dolores Perin. In a new meta-analysis led by one of the authors, Steve Graham, the teaching of grammar went from having the lowest effect size of any strategies covered in the 2007 report to one of the highest effect sizes (Graham et al., 2023), leading many to wonder if the adoption of more modern practices is at least part of this striking jump.

The goal of this book is to compile what works while unpacking what makes so many language concepts—the ones we seemingly have to reteach every single year like students have never seen them before—so notoriously slippery. It also offers a practicing classroom view of what grammar and language lessons grounded in research can look like.

At the core of the book are six key practices for language instruction that can help educators to inspire both learning and love of language in their students. While many of these practices are time-tested, they are rarely used in the classroom—which may contribute to why grammar and language instruction is so commonly disliked and ineffective. When utilized, though, these practices are key to creating grammar and language curriculums that ignite and inform.

## KEY PRACTICE 1: TEACH GRAMMAR AND LANGUAGE CONCEPTS BOTH IN AND WITH CONTEXT

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The 1990s saw a pedagogical shift from teaching grammar and language concepts with random worksheets, diagrams, and problems toward teaching language and grammar in context of a student's own writing. Led by Constance Weaver, Jeff Anderson, and others, this in-context approach sought to correct a long-standing and ironic issue with language and grammar instruction: It is often viewed as one of the most disconnected, esoteric subjects in school, when in reality it is one of the most instantly applicable, practical things one can learn. The point of learning about grammar and language is to learn how to more accurately express oneself, and yet so often in

schools explicit instruction of grammar and language is so disconnected from student writing that it feels to many students like little more than random lessons learned at random times for some unknown reason.

Teaching grammar in the context of student writing was an important and enduring pedagogical shift—one that you will find throughout this book. It comes with a major issue, though: Many students, even when they are taught to use a colon in their own writing, still question why they have to learn about colons at all. They, and many of those around them, may have gotten through their lives just fine without ever using a colon. So why do they need to know how to use a colon again?

This common issue is why this book advocates teaching language and grammar in context in two ways: teaching topics in context of student writing *and teaching the wider context of why the topics are important in the first place.*

Throughout this book you will find terminology, content, and discussions that have historically lived in college-level linguistics classes—things like the history and evolution of the English language and languages in general; what a convention is and where current conventions came from; linguistic terminology like *dialect*, *idiolect*, and *register*; and debates around conventions and code-switching versus code-meshing. The point of all this is to help students to understand the wider context of grammar and language instruction—an understanding that can motivate young people to invest in the content and allow them to better utilize and adapt the lessons learned.

To go back to the example of the colon, this means that discussion of colons isn't limited to what a colon is and its common conventions; instead, the discussion extends to its history, how tools for emphasis like the colon can be used to impress readers and help human writing stand out from generative artificial intelligence (AI) writing, and inquiry concerning the way colons are used by different writers and used by the authors read in class.

## KEY PRACTICE 2: TEACHING GRAMMAR AND LANGUAGE FOR TRANSFER

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Most of the dozens of grammar and style books on my shelf follow a similar organizational concept: They are broken into classic grammar/language categories like parts of speech, conventions,



syntax, mechanics, sentence structure, and usage. In these books nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions get lumped together because they are parts of speech. Commas, colons, periods, and dashes all share a space because they are mechanical tools. This style of organization goes back to what is often recognized as the first English grammar book, Robert Lowth's (1762) *A Short Introduction to English Grammar: With Critical Notes*, in which Lowth begins with syllables before working through the various parts of speech and then ending with punctuation.

You may have already noticed from the table of contents that this book has a slightly different organization. Specifically, the chapters are organized by *what impact the tools have*, not what they are. This means a blending of the classic language instruction categories. Instead of parsing language instruction into grammar or mechanics or rhetoric, it is presented in different combinations according to the effect the tools and topics discussed have on a piece of writing. This means that the colon appears in a different unit altogether (as a tool for adding emphasis) than its keyboard cousin the semicolon (which is discussed in the chapter on sentence cadence and combination). The purpose of this seemingly minor difference is to correct a long-standing issue for language and grammar lessons, which is that students often understand the lessons seemingly fine on a worksheet and then struggle to transfer those lessons to their own writing or other contexts.

Modern pedagogical understanding has helped to make clear that when students struggle to transfer information from one place to another, one of the first places we should look is at how we organize instruction. So often as experts we forget that students often don't see the connections and applications we so easily do. Thus, when teaching something new, we must always be on the lookout for ways to make the connections and applications concerning whatever we are teaching about as clear as possible. This is commonly called "teaching for transfer," and it is the reason for the somewhat different organization of this book. Before reorganizing my curriculum, I taught my students about dashes in a punctuation unit, but this never seemed to inspire them to use dashes in their own writing, and afterwards they still regularly confused hyphens and dashes. Now they learn about dashes in a unit on emphasis, and while that change might not seem profound, they now, without any particular prompting from me, often use so many dashes after our lesson that sometimes I have to remind them to use them judiciously, unless of course they are mimicking the style of Dickinson or Du Bois (but more on that later).



## GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### The Difference Between *Grammar*, *Mechanics*, *Syntax*, *Usage*, and *Rhetoric*

*Grammar*, *mechanics*, *syntax*, *usage*, and *rhetoric* are words so closely linked and used so interchangeably that I've found most teachers don't fully grasp all the differences between them. And while my units often combine them, and I'm not sure all students need to know the specifics of how they differ, as a language teacher it is probably worth understanding the difference.

- *Grammar* has a wide range of definitions. The most common is that it is the collection of the rules that govern an approach to language. One can think about it as the code guiding the language's system and structure.
- *Syntax* is the order of words in a sentence. To discuss syntax is to discuss why one word comes after another.
- *Usage* is the way in which words are used. It is essentially about word meaning, and many word meaning discussions that are commonly lumped in with grammar—like *fewer* and *less*—are technically about usage, not grammar as it is traditionally defined.
- *Mechanics* are the small bits that govern the flow and help it fit together. Punctuation, capitalization, and sometimes spelling are often considered to be a part of mechanics.
- *Rhetoric* is the study of tools that allow a reader to connect, persuade, and move. You can think about it as the study of the tricks, compiled over millennia, for effectively communicating with an audience.

## KEY PRACTICE 3: MAKE GRAMMAR ABOUT TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES, NOT ERRORS

Teachers often tell students they should learn about grammar and language so they can avoid errors. This rationale goes back to the beginning of English language and grammar instruction

(a history we'll dive further into later), yet for 300 years, this justification has failed to inspire interest and engagement for many students. From a linguistic perspective, it is also not exactly accurate, or at least it's an oversimplification. Every student who comes into our classes already follows internal grammatical rules and conventions. These rules—far from being random or incorrect—are an amalgamation of the rules that exist in the language of those around them. And according to linguistic science (Baker-Bell, 2020; Kolln & Grey, 2016; Pinker, 1994; Young et al., 2014), the rules they follow are just as consistent and logical as any other set of rules that another follows. Students don't fully understand this, and yet many will still feel upset when told that they (and by proxy those around them) are in error because it certainly doesn't feel like an error to them.

Another issue with a focus on errors is that recent years have seen the rise of generative AI and highly accurate proofreading programs. These tools mean that anytime we compose something with a computer, we now likely have a powerful digital grammarian sitting with us who is unlikely to let us do much splicing with our commas or transposing of a *there* with a *their*.

Deeper discussion of conventions and errors comes in Chapter 4, but this book—both with conventions and with all the other lessons—takes a different approach that focuses less on learning language and grammar to avoid making errors and more on learning about language so that we have more tools and better understanding of how to use those tools to accurately express ourselves. It also does this because while we come preprogrammed with an ability to communicate, the study of language is all about learning from those who've come before how to express ourselves better, be clearer, and more effectively entertain, persuade, and connect. Further, our students already come with tremendous linguistic assets and a way of speaking that is singular in the span of human history. When language study becomes about opportunities, their gifts can become inspiration for both others and themselves.

When students realize that the classroom discussions of language and grammar will seek to help them with expressing their thoughts and ideas more effectively—and demonstrate and broadcast their own unique voice—many open up to them with a level of passion and curiosity that grammar and mechanics aren't usually known for inspiring.



## TEACHING TIP

A regular feature of my classes that I learned from Matt Kay, the author of *Not Light, but Fire* (2018), is to discuss why something matters before delving too deeply into it. We often assume that students know why learning about a topic, having a class discussion, building a community, or reading or writing about literature matter because we know why it they matter. But students don't always see the point, and if they don't, it becomes another hoop to jump through, meaning they will likely put in just enough effort to clear the hoop—if they decide to jump at all. Investing a few minutes in a conversation, ideally a student-led one, about the importance of the things we talk about can have an impressive return on investment. When students see that we read literature because it is as close as we can get to a handbook for life, we have class discussions because it allows us to stand for a second in the shoes of another, and we learn about language so we can be heard clearer and louder; the impact on engagement can often be striking.

## KEY PRACTICE 4: BEING JOYFUL AND CURIOUS

Two weeks before the United States shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I attended what turned out to be an incredibly useful workshop for my pandemic teaching. In the workshop “Teaching for Joy,” Ohio Northern University storyteller and professor Kevin Cordi (2020) pointed out that we often think of joy in the classroom as an either-or. We can do something fun or something meaningful. We can seek joy or do the work. He then spent the entire session disproving this false dichotomy, pointing out that joy in the classroom can

- Improve student work
- Increase student motivation
- Strengthen our classroom communities
- Decrease the stress levels of both students and teachers (Cordi, 2020)

Over the next three years, I thought about that session a lot as I watched joy evaporate from classrooms in the pursuit of

helping students with any gaps that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic as they shifted between online, hybrid, and in-person instruction modalities. In those years, student motivation and work were often absent, communities were often splintered, and stress levels were often teeth-clenchingly high, and yet one of the main tools that could have made a positive impact on these problems—joy—was conspicuously absent.

Of course, there were plenty of legitimate reasons not to feel joyful during those months, and leaning into joy wasn't always appropriate or what we or our students needed in those moments. Even still, in the moments where I remembered the importance of and actively pursued joy—maybe by choosing just the right song to start a Zoom meeting or having students write about superb owls to celebrate the Super Bowl—the response was striking.

In his session, Cordi (2020) pointed out what I found to be true during the pandemic: The biggest positive impact from joy often comes in the areas where it is often the most absent. And grammar and language aren't usually synonymous with joy or its close cousin, curiosity. The approach in this book seeks to correct that and infuse the power that joy can bring to make lessons memorable, interesting, less stressful, and more effective. Gholdy Muhammad (2023) in her book *Unearthing Joy: A Guide to Culturally and Historically Responsive Curriculum and Instruction* reminds us that “joy is the ultimate goal of teaching and learning” (p. 17)—something worth remembering as we craft grammar and language lessons.

## KEY PRACTICE 5: THOUGHTFUL REVISITING AND RETRIEVAL

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In my early years as a teacher, most of my grammar and language instruction took place in mini-lessons or grammatical corrections on students' work. And time and again I marveled at how little impact both had. When it came to commenting on papers, I often found myself correcting run-on sentences or reminding a student to capitalize the start of each sentence only to have the same students run on and not capitalize the next time like nothing had been said. At times I wondered why I even bothered to correct the students, and I often felt Dylan Wiliam (2017) was right when he called marking of errors in student papers “the most expensive PR exercise in history.”

Similar issues arose in my grammar mini-lessons. I would take a day to teach about commas or why students should

use appositives, yet a week later, there would be all the same comma issues and no more appositives than before. All that it appeared like I'd accomplished was burning a day that could have been spent on reading and writing.

As I look back, I realize that one of the chief issues in my approach was the nature of memory. There are some details about human memory that explain where many of the issues with student retention might have come from. Generally speaking, we humans

- Start forgetting things the second we finish learning them
- Forget more and more with each day that passes, with the vast majority of what we learn evaporating from our minds within a week or less
- Forget nearly everything we encounter only once

Our tendency to forget is a major problem, but luckily there is a simple solution that can help turn our memories from sieves to safes: retrieval practice. Retrieval practice is the idea that if you really want to remember something, simply try to recall it on at least a handful of different occasions (Agarwal & Bain, 2019). The act of recalling and revisiting something might not seem flashy, but research consistently confirms it is a high-powered teaching move because the act of seeking to find information and then thinking about that information signals to the brain that it is important. In response to that flag, the brain then strengthens the neural connections where the information is stored, making it more accessible in the future, almost like a thumbnail image added to a computer desktop.

Retrieval practice and revisiting key ideas multiple times and in multiple ways and configurations (this is often called interleaving, and it too is a powerful teaching tool) are far more common classroom practices than they used to be. The one notable exception is language and grammar instruction, which still tends to be marked in a paper or delivered in a mini-lesson once (maybe before a standardized test) and then never visited again, at least not until the next paper or test prep the next year.

If we want grammar and language lessons to stick and real understanding to materialize, we need to treat them like the other central skills and topics in our curriculum and find ways to thoughtfully cycle back. And we need to find ways to clearly connect our grammar instruction to the reading and writing students are doing.

## KEY PRACTICE 6: PURPOSEFUL, PHILOSOPHICAL VOLUME

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Iconic, canonical language arts texts—texts like Nancy Atwell’s *In the Middle* (2014) or Donalyn Miller’s *The Book Whisperer* (2009) or Gholdy Muhammad’s *Cultivating Genius* (2020)—have something in common: The educators who wrote these texts have a clearly defined philosophical approach that they stick to every . . . single . . . moment. Atwell’s students knew that they would be using their trusty notebooks every day. Miller’s students knew that they would talk about the books they were reading every class. And Muhammad’s students knew that everything they did would be filtered through her four (now five, including joy) pursuits. There is no doubt that the pedagogical approaches of these three women are brilliant and remarkable, but it should also be noted that their brilliance shines so brightly because of their commitment to their respective philosophical and instructional approaches.

In talking to hundreds of educators, students, friends, and family about grammar while writing this book, I have found that those who love language and grammar all could identify at least one teacher who had an enthusiastic, regular commitment to language study—a commitment that helped them to see its beauty and importance, too.

These passionate language teachers stood out from the disconnected, à la carte approach often taken with grammar and language—an approach that is so easy because while studying a novel or crafting a paper or project requires a regular commitment, grammar can be easily broken into bite-sized lessons that are given when there is a moment to spare.

While I don’t believe there is one system for regularly revisiting grammar that is inherently superior, there are a few features that are important:

- **Regular practice.** This means coming to grammar and language at the same time each week and showing the importance of that time by not skipping it, even when the inevitable wrenches that come with the school year start flying at you.
- **Regular routines around this regular study.** Gretchen Bernabei (2015) has students record what they learn about grammar in their “Grammar Keepers,” notes that track what they’ve learned. I do something similar where all of the grammar/language lessons go into a specific spot on my classroom page that corresponds with the specific place students put grammar/language notes and practice in their notebooks.

- **Regular interleaving, or mixing together topics and tasks.** For example, while discussing how to write opening lines, the teacher can bring up language tools designed to make a splash, from parallel structure to purposeful fragments. This sort of blending has been shown to improve retention by strengthening neural pathways.

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Brock Haussamen (2003) famously stated in *Grammar Alive!* that the study of grammar is “the skunk at the garden party of the language arts” (p. x). This same skunk status could be conferred easily enough to grammar’s linguistic cousins like mechanics, syntax, usage, and even rhetoric. And many students when confronted with these things—with discussions of clauses and commas and conjunctions—act as though a real skunk has strolled into the classroom, treading as quietly as possible and actively wishing it away.

There are legitimate reasons for these reactions (that will be explored in Chapter 1), but it doesn’t have to be this way. Grammar and language study doesn’t have to be harsh, hurtful, or hated. It can affirm who students are, empower them through showing them how language works, delight and provoke interesting thoughts and revelations, and help our students to grow in their ability to write and understand the world and themselves.

In that first English grammar book, *A Short Introduction to English Grammar: With Critical Notes*, Lowth (1762) defines grammar as “the Art of rightly expressing our thoughts by Words” (p. 1). While Lowth and I would likely diverge concerning the meaning of the word *rightly*, I could hardly think of a better definition. The point of learning about grammar, syntax, usage, mechanics, rhetoric, and language as a whole is to learn to express our ideas, our voice, and ourselves as accurately and effectively—or, in other words, as *rightly*—as possible. And in that pursuit grammar and language study *can be good*. It can be a force for joy, a powerful affirming pursuit, and a life-changing set of skills and knowledge. Let’s go find out how.