

**The Stewart  
English Program**

**Book 2  
Grammar Plus...**

Donald S. Stewart



*Grammar instruction is hard to find in schools these days, but this totally new approach results in immediate writing success. Every chapter immediately progresses from the grammar lesson, to applying the new skills to that night's writing assignment. This great writing course values grammar and brings it back to life for the 21st century.*

## **The Stewart English Program: Book 2 Grammar Plus . . .**

by Donald S. Stewart

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# The Stewart English Program

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## Book 2 Grammar Plus...

Donald S. Stewart



**About the author:** Donald S. Stewart taught English at Belmont Hill School, an independent school for boys in Belmont, Massachusetts. In 1990 he founded Write for College, an intensive summer writing course that he directed for 25 years, preparing high school students from the Boston area for the writing challenges of college and beyond. In 2015 he took the course online at <http://writingwhatever.com>.

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	v
1. VERBS.....	1
2. NOUNS.....	17
3. ADJECTIVES .....	39
4. ADVERBS.....	57
5. PREPOSITIONS .....	65
6. CONJUNCTIONS AND INTERJECTIONS.....	73
7. PRONOUNS .....	79
8. THE ABSOLUTE PHRASE .....	87
9. AGREEMENT .....	93
10. USAGE.....	101
11. PUNCTUATION.....	115
12. WRITING PATTERNS.....	125
13. THE IDEA BANK .....	133

# 12. WRITING PATTERNS

Now that you have learned the pieces of the writing puzzle—parts of the sentence, parts of speech, phrases, clauses, and punctuation—it is time to put them all together. We will use two new terms to describe how a sentence is constructed.

**Base clause:** A base clause is a sentence, with a subject, a predicate, and maybe a few adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases along the way. It is the central grammatical unit, to which we will add free modifiers, as discussed in the next section.

We label a base clause by putting the number 1 at the beginning of it. Sometimes we refer to the base clause as a **Level 1**.

**Free modifier:** A free modifier is any word, phrase, or clause that is set apart from the base clause by some form of punctuation. It is called *free* because of its separateness from the base clause, and also because free modifiers (except for the adjective clause) are often free to move around in a sentence and appear in more than one location. We will label a free modifier as a **Level 2**, **Level 3**, and so on, depending on what it modifies. A Level 2 will modify something in the Level 1, a Level 3 will modify something in the Level 2. Together these form **Levels of Generality**. The Level 1 serves as the foundation, and each additional level further describes, explains, compares, or otherwise clarifies the idea expressed in the previous level.

Here are some examples that show how these levels of generality work together. You should be able to identify the grammatical structure of each free modifier.

- 1 He got back up quickly,  
      2 blinking in the darkness,  
      2 his mouth warm with blood.—Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*
- 1 I pedal furiously now,  
      2 not because I want to catch up with them,  
      2 but because this road is deserted and I want to reach a better road or  
            highway as soon as possible.—Robert Cormier, *I Am the Cheese*
- 1 Sophie knelt up,  
      2 her hands covered in earth,  
      2 her hair awry, and  
      2 an expression on her face that Penelope had never seen before.  
            —Rosamunde Pilcher, *The Shell Seekers*
- 1 He is a poorly educated man,  
      2 small,  
      2 active,  
      2 with his right leg off, and  
      2 wearing a wooden stump which is worn away upon the inner side.  
            —Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Sign of the Four"

- 1 Cordelia sits with nonchalance,
  - 2 nudging me with her elbow now and then,
  - 2 staring blankly at the other people with her gray-green eyes,
  - 3 opaque and glinting as metal.—Margaret Atwood, *Cat's Eye*
- 1 Harriet Blacking was the dark presence in the school,
  - 2 a rather small girl,
  - 3 plump,
  - 3 nearly neckless,
  - 3 with dead-white skin and the thinnest nose Catherine had ever seen,
  - 4 as thin as the blade of a pocketknife.

—Paula Fox, *The Moonlight Man*

If a free modifier is located within the base clause or another free modifier, we use the symbol / to show that there has been an interruption. We also label the interrupter with a / symbol after the level number. Here are some examples.

- 1 We went up the riverbank, / , and threaded our way through a labyrinth of silver-grey boulders and rust-red anthills,
  - 2/ falling into single file again
  - 2 shaped variously like witches caps or the figures of kneeling giants or like trees without branches.—Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*
- 2 As he drew closer to the cry,
  - 1 he went more slowly,
  - 2 with caution in every movement,
  - 2 till he came to an open place among the trees, and looking out saw, / , a long, lean, timber wolf.
    - 3/ erect on haunches
    - 3/ with nose pointed to the sky—Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

Here is a summary of the most common free modifiers.

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. adjectives                                      | 6. past participial phrase |
| 2. adverbs   | 7. infinitive phrase       |
| 3. prepositional phrases (often with <i>like</i> ) | 8. adjective clause        |
| 4. appositive                                      | 9. adverb clause           |
| 5. present participial phrase                      | 10. absolute phrase        |

In Exercise A, be able to identify what each modifier is. In later exercises you will be asked to fill in your own free modifiers.

# WRITING PATTERNS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE A: levels of generality

Accuracy: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Lay out the following sentences by the numbers, as shown on the previous two pages, to indicate the “Levels of Generality,” indenting where necessary. There may be more blank lines for you to write on than there are levels, since some levels may need more than one line to write out. Do not include the title and author.

1. Portia, waiting for Eddie as she had often waited, turned her fists round slowly in her pockets, regretting that he should have been called away just now.—Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*

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2. I've been walking for hours it seems, down the hill to the downtown, where the streetcars no longer run.—Margaret Atwood, *Cat's Eye*

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3. The captain soon knuckled under, put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like a beaten dog.—Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*

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4. Just as Mr. Summers left off talking and turned to the assembled villagers, Mrs. Hutchinson came hurriedly along the path to the square, her sweater thrown over her shoulder, and slid into place at the back of the crowd.—Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery”

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5. Ralph stood now, one hand against an enormous red block, a block large as a mill wheel that had been split off and hung, tottering.—William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

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6. After a little while Mr. Gatz opened the door and came out, his mouth ajar, his face flushed lightly, his eyes leaking isolated and unpunctual tears. —F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

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7. It was nearly nine o'clock when Squealer made his appearance, walking slowly and dejectedly, his eyes dull, his tail hanging limply behind him, and with every appearance of being seriously ill. —George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

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8. Ursula's blanket—or, rather Julian's old army blanket—was folded, palletlike, in the corner of the hut, just as it had been when I first surprised her lying on it, trying to read her book. —Gail Godwin, *The Finishing School*

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9. He stood patiently in front of her, as he had stood in front of the lieutenant, listening. —Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*

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10. Deborah had looked about and found that she could not see except in outlines, gray against gray, and with no depth, but flatly, like a picture. —Hannah Green, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*

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**WRITING PATTERNS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE B: writing levels of generality**

Accuracy: \_\_\_\_\_ Creativity: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** In the following sentences, we have provided the base clause. Fill in the other levels with free modifiers as suggested. Be alert to where each sentence ends and the next begins.

1. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
     (present participial phrase)

1 he cautiously entered the cave,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
     (comparison)

2. 1 She sat on the edge of the swimming pool,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
     (present participial phrase)  
 3 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
     (adverb clause)

3. 1 The patient, / , seemed well on the road to recovery.

2/ \_\_\_\_\_ but  
 2/ \_\_\_\_\_  
     (past participial phrase)

4. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
     (infinitive phrase as adverb, telling why)  
 3 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
     (adjective clause)

1 our neighbors built an eight-foot stockade fence around their whole property.

5. 1 The new champion stood proudly on the pedestal,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
     (absolute phrase)

6. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
     (adverb clause)

1 the rescue party fanned out in all directions,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
     (present participial phrase)

7. 1 One by one the marathon runners, / , crossed the finish line.

2/ \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_  
(adjective) (adjective)

8. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(adverb) (adverb)

3 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(comparison)

1 he unscrewed the cap.

9. 1 She browsed through the Travel Section of the Sunday newspaper,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(present participle phrase)  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(appositive)

10. 1 I'm running out of time to finish my project,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(appositive)  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(adverb clause)

11. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(present participle phrase)

1 the ambassador extended her hand toward the consul,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(adjective clause)

12. 1 They told us to form two lines,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ and  
(appositive)  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(appositive)

13. 1 I sat quietly in the waiting room,

2 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(present participle phrase)  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
(adjective clause)  
4 \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(adverb clause)

14. 2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*simple adverb*)  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_, and  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*past participial phrase*)  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_, (*present participial phrase*)
- 1 they rounded the turn and headed for home.
15. 2 With \_\_\_\_\_,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*absolute phrase*)
- 1 the doctor came out of the operating room,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_.  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*present participial phrase*)
16. 1 The magnificent Bengal tiger roamed through its realistic habitat,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*present participial phrase*)  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*present participial phrase*)  
       3 \_\_\_\_\_.  
       3 \_\_\_\_\_ (*adverb clause*)
17. 1 Most of the fans have been standing in line for over two hours,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*absolute phrase*)  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_.  
       2 \_\_\_\_\_ (*absolute phrase*)
18. 1 Mr. and Mrs. Killian, / , were honored at the annual dinner last night.  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_ and  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_ (*appositive*)  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_ (*appositive*)
19. 1 The athletic fields, / , were ready for the first game of the season.  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_ and  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_ (*past participial phrase*)  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_  
       2/ \_\_\_\_\_ (*past participial phrase*)

20. 2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(infinitive phrase as adverb, telling why)*

3 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(adjective clause)*

1 the School Committee met far into the night.

21. 1 The baby loved the new toy,  
2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(appositive)*  
3 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(past participle phrase)*  
4 \_\_\_\_\_.  
*(comparison)*

22. 2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(appositive)*  
2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(appositive)*  
2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(appositive)*

1 – everything was finally packed for our cross-country camping trip.

23. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ and  
*(past participle phrase)*  
2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(present participle phrase)*

1 the puppy looked mournfully up at me,

2 \_\_\_\_\_.  
*(present participle phrase)*

24. 2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(adverb clause)*  
3 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(adjective clause)*

1 the florist trimmed off the dead leaves and snipped the bottoms of the stems.

25. 1 The sprinter settled into the starting blocks,  
2 \_\_\_\_\_,  
*(adverb clause)*  
2 \_\_\_\_\_.  
*(adverb clause)*

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