

From the Grouchy Grammarian's Shelves:

A Bibliography of Works on Language and Related Subjects

The Grouch's Old Favorites:

A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, by H. W. Fowler (in its original [1926], second corrected [1937], and revised [by Sir Ernest Gowers—1965] editions); also the latest version (1996) of this famous book, published as *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, edited by R. W. Burchfield (Oxford University Press);

The King's English, by H. W. and F. G. Fowler—another Fowler classic (Oxford University Press, 1906; third edition, 1931);

A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage, by Bergen Evans and Cornelia Evans (well worth an extensive search in second-hand bookstores (Random House, 1957; reprinted by Galahad Books, 1981);

Modern American Usage, by Wilson Follett, edited and completed by Jacques Barzun et al. (Hill and Wang, 1966).

The Complete Plain Words, by Sir Ernest Gowers—an assault on “officialese” by a civil servant who also revised Fowler (David R. Godine, 1988);

Classics in Linguistics, a collection made up of contributions from some of the leading twentieth-century scholars in the field—Otto Jespersen, Leonard Bloomfield, George L. Kittredge, Noam Chomsky, and others (Philosophical Library, 1967);

The Chicago Manual of Style (all editions, from the eleventh [1949] to the present, of this standard handbook for publishers and editors (University of Chicago Press);

Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, the centenary edition, revised by Ivor H. Evans (Harper, 1970).

Other important works, old and new:

The King's English, by Kingsley Amis—this notable novelist's last book (St. Martin's, 1997);

The Complete Stylist, by Sheridan Baker—"slips in grammar," the author reminds us, "can only distract your reader from what you are saying, and start him thinking, unflatteringly, about you" (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1966);

Grammar and Good Taste, by Dennis E. Baron—an account, by a nonreformer, of two centuries of American attempts to reform the language (Yale University Press, 1982);

Simple & Direct, by Jacques Barzun—a classic from a classic thinker (Harper, 1975);

The Careful Writer, by Theodore M. Bernstein—a handbook by a language guru who based himself at the *New York Times* (Atheneum, 1965);

Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins, by Theodore M. Bernstein (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971);

Words on Words, by John B. Bremner—"In a no-fault society," the author complains, "not much is being done to stay the surge of literary barbarism" (Columbia University Press, 1980);

Words and Things, by Roger Brown (Free Press, 1958);

Modern English and Its Heritage, by Margaret M. Bryant—a good look at thought about grammar and usage in the mid-twentieth century (Macmillan, 1948);

Mother Tongue, by Bill Bryson (Morrow, 1990);

The English Language, by Robert Burchfield—reflections on the "pedigree and credentials" of the language by the editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1985);

Unlocking the English Language, by Robert Burchfield (Hill and Wang, 1991);

The Tyranny of Words, by Stuart Chase—the famous book that long ago introduced many readers to the subject of semantics (Harcourt, Brace, 1938);

Ferocious Alphabets, by Denis Donoghue (Faber and Faber, 1981);

The Highly Selective Dictionary for the Extraordinarily Literate, by Eugene Ehrlich (HarperCollins, 1997);

The HarperCollins Concise Dictionary of English Usage, by Eugene Ehrlich and Daniel Murphy (1991);

Teaching English, by Tricia Evans (Croom Helm, 1982);

A Handbook of Revision, by Norman Foerster and J. M. Steadman, Jr.—the student of writing is told precisely what's what in this compact but thorough and wide-ranging handbook; Foerster was a prominent critic and author during this time, and he and his colleague unflinchingly use terms like *impropriety* and *vulgarism* to set wayward writers straight (Houghton Mifflin, 1931);

A Dictionary of Modern American Usage, by Bryan A. Garner—a contemporary landmark (Oxford University Press, 1998);

A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage, by Bryan A. Garner (Oxford University Press, 1987; second edition, 1995);

Words and Their Ways in English Speech, by J. B. Greenough (Macmillan, 1929);

The Use and Misuse of Language, edited by S. I. Hayakawa, with contributions by Gregory Bateson, Edmund Glenn, and others, as well as by the editor (Harper, 1962);

The State of the Language, by Philip Howard (Oxford University Press, 1985);

A Word in Your Ear, by Philip Howard—quite a few words, actually, from *adultery* to *wizard* (Oxford University Press, 1983);

The Miracle of Language, by Charlton Laird (World, 1953);

The Uses of English, by Herbert J. Muller (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967);

Woe Is I, by Patricia T. O'Conner (Putnam, 1996);

The Opdycke Lexicon of Word Selection, by John B. Opdycke—a work bearing the marvelous subtitle “Illustrative Studies in Dictional Precision for Speakers and Writers” (Funk & Wagnalls, 1950);

Say What You Mean, by John B. Opdycke (Funk & Wagnalls, 1944);

Usage and Abusage, by Eric Partridge—arranged alphabetically and intended to “supplement and complement” Fowler (Hamish Hamilton, 1957 edition; Penguin, 1963);

Dictionary of Linguistics, by Mario Pei and Frank Gaynor (Philosophical Library, 1954);

Pinckert’s Practical Grammar, by Robert C. Pinckert (Writer’s Digest Books, 1986);

Our Language, by Simeon Potter (Penguin, 1950);

Dictionary of Phrase and Allusion, by Nigel Rees (Bloomsbury, 1991);

The Survival of English, by Ian Robinson—essays concerned with how language either fosters or debases the values of the community (Cambridge University Press, 1973);

The Need for Words, Patsy Rodenburg (Routledge, 1993);

In Praise of English, by Joseph T. Shipley (Times Books, 1977);

The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage, by Allan M. Siegal and William G. Connolly—the official, very accessible guide for those writing and editing the “newspaper of record” (Times Books, 1999);

Introduction to English Grammar, by James H. Sledd—a closely reasoned book by an important scholar; not even war, however, could make bedfellows of Professor Sledd and the grouchy grammarian (Scott, Foresman, 1959);

How to Write, by Gertrude Stein (original edition, 1931; issued in America by Something Else Press, 1973). Gertrude Stein? Yes, it was startling, indeed, to see this idiosyncratic literary stylist in such generally sober company, but at one point she does say, winningly, “A grammarian there is a pleasure in the air ...”;

The Elements of Style, by William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White—the classroom rules of White’s old English teacher at Cornell, revived and buttressed by White and thus reborn as a perennial best seller (Macmillan, 1959; 3rd edition, 1979);

Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English, by Owen Thomas (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965);

Cross-Talk in Comp Theory, edited by Victor Villaneuva, Jr. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1997);

A Desk Book of Errors in English, by Frank H. Vizetelly—the longtime editor of Funk & Wagnalls dictionaries tells readers how to use “the right word in the right place” (Grosset & Dunlap, 1906; revised edition, 1920);

The Columbia Guide to Standard American English, by Kenneth G. Wilson (Columbia University Press, 1993).

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