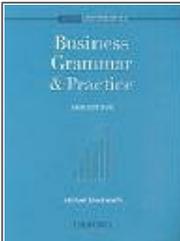


| <i>Business Grammar & Practice</i> | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|--------|
| Author: | Michael Duckworth (2003) | | |
| Publisher: | Oxford: Oxford University Press | | |
| Title | Pages | ISBN | Price |
| Student Book | Pp. xiv + 246 | 0-19-4570797 | £12.95 |



Grammar Business & Practice is a book that uses a great variety of exercises to develop the intermediate and higher intermediate business student's language competence. Instead of following the traditional idea of "just a grammar" book, Duckworth has done an entertaining and rigorous job in covering the features, readings and vocabulary that students require in the global village of communication in English. Indeed, the book includes some traditional exercises of completion, multiple choice, matching and so on. However, the writer also includes more literacy oriented exercises such as readings or writing (which are not so often included in grammar books) and, on top of that, some fun crosswords, guessing games and humanistic activities (p. 89). Additionally, the grammar explanations at the beginning of each chapter show in a clear and well conducted way (the use of different ink colors is a valuable additional asset) the insights of some of the most common and problematic issues in language use and grammar found in many schools and universities all over the world.

Additionally, this book intends to provide current semi-real readings, tables and business indicators, in order to provide the students with a realistic view of the current state of the art in the business world. Thus, topics are well addressed and will certainly help students to engage in grammar and language work. In relation to the exercises, this book brings a very interesting and attractive methodological approach, thanks to which this grammar book can easily overtake other competing books in the same field which currently address the same type of readers. However, it lacks a good introductory chapter which should explain how to work with the book. The back cover blurb gives plenty of information about the text but does not explain the purpose of each section. For example, after observing the different types of exercises, instructors will see how difficult it is to differentiate between the so-called "Practice" and "Production" sections. Out of the whole book, it may be possible to infer that Practice is used for more controlled drilling, while Production is more communicative or deals with open answer activities. In this case, Duckworth, like many other authors, seems to ignore students' natural difficulties when trying to organise their study. In this case, it could have been a great asset to have this introductory chapter.

Grammar Business & Practice is divided into 45 units. Surprisingly, the author implies

that this is "all the grammar you need." It is hard to believe that although the book excels in many areas, it will cover all the grammar needs at this level, or is the author just assuming that business English requires little grammar knowledge? Despite these minor problems, the book also has some bright additions which make it worth mentioning. First, the initial chapter on metalanguage. There is no question for those who teach ESP or, more specifically, business English, that few students fully understand grammar explanations that assume that learners should be familiar with terms as "simple and continuous form" or "object" of a sentence. In just two pages, the author makes clear some of the most frequently used terms throughout the book. These two pages make the comprehension of the grammar explanations much more accessible and, thus, facilitate the student's progress. The other sections that add value to the book are the two final appendixes (about spelling rules and irregular verbs), a set of progress tests (with their answer key) and the final index. In my opinion, a glossary of the most common words could have helped the students a bit more but, overall, the book seems well balanced.

Methodologically speaking, this grammar is a very comprehensive collection of simple instructions which facilitate the student's progress. At first sight, it may look quite normative, but as the students get into the book's structure, it becomes quite clear that this deductive approach used by the writer provides the adult student with the necessary tools to accomplish the different grammar tasks. In my opinion, the reading sections can be very valuable; however, Duckworth fails to include computer and internet information. There seems to be little reason to doubt that much information today is provided by electronic means and those electronic texts have a highly specialized and distinctive register in business. It is precisely this register that the author does not include in the book. Of course, the student will find examples of e-mails and websites but, at least, among the writing sections, these examples do not have the relevant position that this type of documents have in real communication.

One of the best points in Duckworth's work is the layout of the book. Drawings, ink colors and abundance of charts, diagrams and multicoloured explanations will surely improve motivation in some cases and help students to understand the introductory grammar explanations. Also, the boxes and tables help to clarify the important grammatical and lexical items. Additionally, the excellent appendixes and additional materials provide productive tasks, spelling rules (appendix 1), irregular verbs (appendix 2), answer key, progress tests and a complete general index making it ideal material for class and self-study use.

Given the increasing importance of producing additional materials for business English learning, and the students' need to have good grammar extension materials, this book is a very valuable tool. Thus, *Grammar Business & Practice* is a helpful learning instrument for students who may need special language reinforcement as well as for those who want to increase their grammar capability and get additional drilling in their studies.

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