


English Grammar Skills

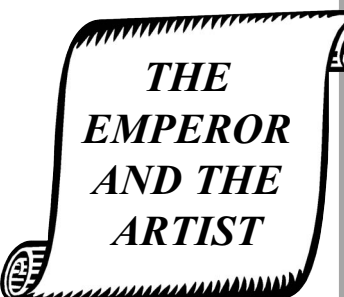


Lesson 1

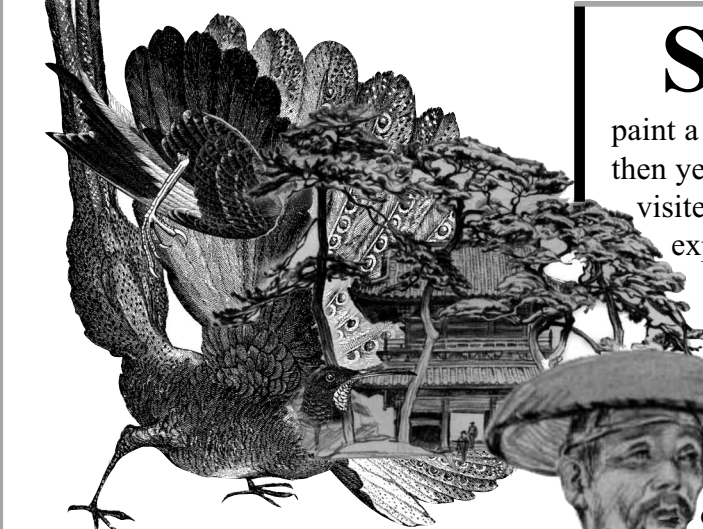
Chapter 1

Section 1

Lessons 1-5



THE EMPEROR AND THE ARTIST



Several *centuries* ago, the *emperor* of Japan *commissioned* a Japanese artist to paint a particular *species* of bird. Months passed, then years. Finally, the Emperor personally visited the artist's studio to ask for an explanation.

The artist set a blank canvas on the *easel* and within fifteen minutes had completed a painting of a bird. It was a *masterpiece*! The Emperor, admiring both the painting and the artist's skill, asked why the artist had delayed so long. The artist then opened cabinet after cabinet in his studio. He pulled from the cabinets armloads of drawings of feathers,

tendons, wings, feet, claws,

eyes, beaks—*virtually* every *aspect* of a bird, from virtually every angle. He placed these silently before the Emperor, who nodded in understanding. The *magnificence* of any “whole” can never be greater than the magnificence of any singular detail.

To have an excellent life, *strive* for an excellent year. Within that year, strive for an excellent month, and within that month, strive for an excellent day. Within the day, strive for an excellent hour. An excellent life is the sum of many excellent moments! ■
(HB)

VOCABULARY

Century: 100 years

Emperor: the supreme ruler of a land (country or region)

Commission: to authorize, order or hire to perform certain duties or tasks

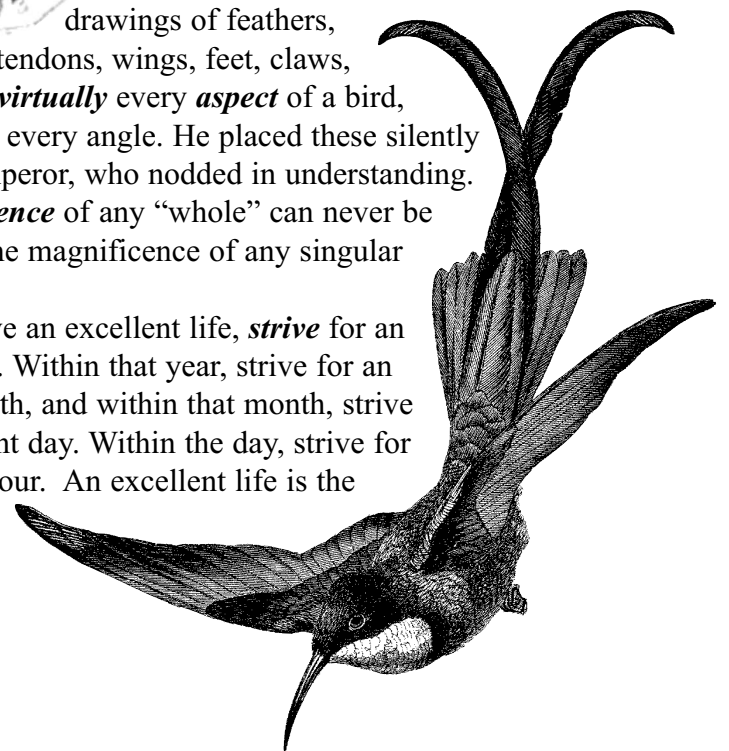
Species: a type, kind or group

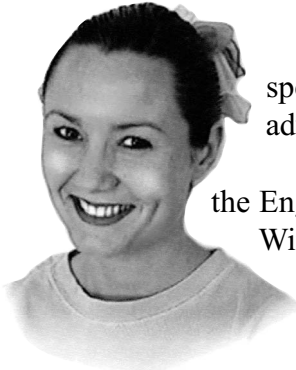
Easel: an upright frame to hold an artist's canvas

Masterpiece: a work of art that is far above others in quality

Virtually: basically; in effect, although not in fact

Aspect: any one of the possible ways in which an object, idea or problem may be regarded





PARTS OF SPEECH

English speakers and writers, such as yourself, use the parts of speech every day. They are: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections.

The parts of speech are similar to the parts of a bird. The bird is the English language, and its individual body parts are the parts of speech. Without all of the parts, the bird is not complete. The same rule is true for the parts of speech. They are the building blocks of the English language. Each has a part to play.

The parts of speech are also similar to the players in a game. English is the game and the parts of speech are the players. All players contribute, and each role is important. Some players play the whole game, while others come in only from time to time. Because nouns are the “players” that are used the most, we will start with them.

NOUNS

The word *noun* comes from the Latin word *nomen*, which means *name*. Nouns are “name words.” They name **persons, places, things** and **ideas**.

■ **Persons:** This category names people and includes who they are and what they are.

Examples: artist man emperor Michael Mary

■ **Places:** This category names all kinds of places—where people visit, live or work.

Examples: studio country Japan office farm palace

■ **Things:** This category is very *broad*. *Things* are items you can see and items you cannot see. In this category are objects, animals, times and events.

Examples:

easel	species
picture	war
bird	years
days	hours
<i>reign</i>	time
silence	World War I

■ **Ideas:** This category expresses beliefs, feelings and ideas.

Examples:

<i>philosophy</i>	love
faith	understanding
responsibility	excellence
obedience	kindness

VOCABULARY

Magnificence: awesome beauty; richness, splendor, excellence

Strive: to make great efforts; to try very hard; to compete

Broad: wide, indefinite, not specific

Reign: the time period in which a sovereign rules a region

Philosophy: beliefs, truth and knowledge

Rembrandt: a style of art created by Rembrandt van Rijn, a Dutchman who lived during the 1600s (17th century)



Common and Proper Nouns

Common nouns give the general names of persons, places, things or ideas. Common nouns begin with small letters (lower case). Proper nouns name specific persons, places and things. Proper nouns begin with capital (large or upper case) letters.

<u>common nouns</u>	<u>proper nouns</u>
man	Emperor Hirohito
country	Japan
artist	Rembrandt
boy	Michael
girl	Jeanette

Singular and Plural Nouns

Nouns are either singular or plural. If the noun names only one person, place, thing or idea, the noun is singular. If the noun names more than one person, place, thing or idea, the noun is plural.

<u>singular</u>	<u>plural</u>
emperor	emperors
artist	artists
studio	studios

You are doing well! You have successfully completed the first half of Lesson One. In order to complete the second half, continue to the Activities.

