

# English: Language Skills



## Lesson 1

# Chapter 1

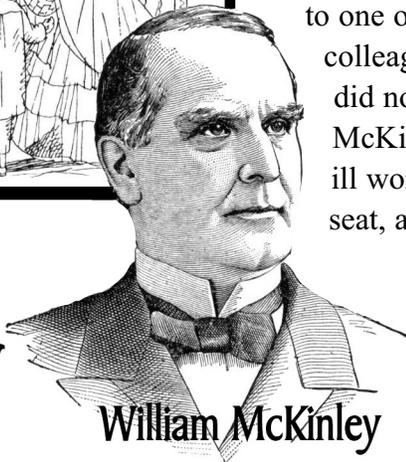
## Section 1

Lessons 1-5

A  
**VALUABLE  
LESSON IN  
MANNERS**



**W**illiam McKinley served in *Congress* before he was elected the 25th President of the United States. On his way to his congressional office one morning, he boarded a *streetcar* and took the only remaining seat. Minutes later, a woman, who appeared to be ill, boarded the car. Unable to find a seat, she clutched an overhead strap next to one of McKinley's *colleagues*. The colleague hid behind his newspaper and did not offer his seat to the woman. McKinley walked up the aisle, tapped the ill woman on the shoulder, offered his seat, and took her place in the aisle.



William McKinley

## VOCABULARY

**Congress:** the lawmaking body of the United States government

**Streetcar:** a vehicle that runs by rails on city streets

**Colleague:** fellow worker

**Ambassador:** a representative of one country sent to another country for political relations

**Prominence:** important or influential position in a country or community

Years later, when McKinley became president of the United States, the same congressman was recommended for a post as *ambassador* to a foreign nation. McKinley refused to appoint the Congressman. The president feared that a man who did not have the courtesy to offer his seat to a sick woman in a crowded streetcar would lack the courtesy and sensitivity necessary to be an ambassador in a troubled nation. The disappointed congressman bemoaned his fate to many in Washington, but never did learn why McKinley chose someone else for the position.

Acts of kindness may lead you to *prominence*. Then, from that position of prominence, you can be kind to even more people! ■ (HB)

## PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words used in place of nouns. Without pronouns, our language would be cumbersome. Read the following paragraph. Pronouns were eliminated in order to show how the repetition of the same nouns makes reading difficult.



William McKinley served in Congress before **McKinley** was elected the 25<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. On **McKinley's** way to **McKinley's** congressional office one morning, **McKinley** boarded a streetcar and took the only remaining seat. Minutes later, a woman who appeared to be ill boarded the car. Unable to find a seat, **the woman** clutched an overhead strap next to one of McKinley's colleagues. The other colleague hid behind **the colleague's** newspaper and did not offer **the colleague's** seat to the woman. McKinley walked up the aisle, tapped the ill woman on the shoulder, offered **McKinley's** seat to the woman and took **the woman's** place in the aisle.

Below is the same paragraph with pronouns:

William McKinley served in Congress before **he** was elected the 25<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. On **his** way to **his** congressional office one morning, **he** boarded a streetcar and took the only remaining seat. Minutes later, a woman who appeared to be ill boarded the car. Unable to find a seat, **she** clutched an overhead strap next to one of McKinley's colleagues. The colleague hid behind **his** newspaper and did not offer **his** seat to the woman. McKinley walked up the aisle, tapped the ill woman on the shoulder, offered **his** seat to the woman and took **her** place in the aisle.

The second paragraph reads more smoothly. Pronouns are wonderful writing tools! They help avoid cumbersome overuse of nouns.

## ANTECEDENTS

An *antecedent* is the word or group of words to which a pronoun refers. A pronoun usually refers to a previous noun. Not all antecedents appear in the same sentence as the pronoun. A pronoun may refer to an antecedent mentioned in a previous sentence.

**Example #1:** *William McKinley* served in Congress before *he* was elected the 25th President of the United States.

- The pronoun *he* refers to the antecedent *William McKinley*.

**Example #2:** The *woman* was unable to find a seat, so *she* clutched an overhead strap.

- The pronoun *she* refers to the antecedent *woman*.

**Example #3:** *William McKinley* served in Congress before being elected the 25th President of the United States. On *his* way to *his* congressional office one morning, *he* boarded a streetcar and took the only remaining seat.

- The pronouns *his* and *he* in the second sentence refer to the antecedent *William McKinley* in the first sentence.

**Example #4:** A *woman* who appeared to be ill boarded the car. Unable to find a seat, *she* clutched an overhead strap.

- The pronoun *she* in the second sentence refers to the antecedent *woman* in the first sentence.

Continue to the Activities and practice your knowledge of pronouns and their antecedents.

*Life Principle*

**“You cannot  
do a kindness too soon,  
because you never know  
when it will be too late!”**

—Anonymous

