

The study of grammar has always caught the interest of scholars, but in the popular mind has remained difficult. This is a shame, of course, because the fundamental purpose of language is to communicate intelligibly and grammar allows us to do so with ease and precision. Most people in Europe today, regardless of where they live, must study English grammar because the language has taken on an important role in international dealings. If grammar is so important, we might ask why so few people like studying it.

An unfortunate consequence of the influence of classical languages on English grammar is the idea that all relevant grammatical distinctions and standards of use could be obtained by automatically applying the practices of Latin grammar. For example, an English grammar text that was widely used until the 1960s claimed that English verbs had more than 40 forms, just like their Latin counterparts. Students had to master and correctly apply a classification system that was alien to English. Grammarians took joy in condemning sentences ending with prepositions. Most grammar studies were prescriptive as opposed to descriptive. Today, the prevalent approach is clearly descriptive. In addition, teachers in the 19th and early 20th centuries only considered formal styles of speech worth studying, so that the language that most children heard and used at home and elsewhere received little positive reinforcement in school. It hardly comes as a surprise, then, that the subject seemed distant and unreal.

(241 words; text adapted from CRYSTAL, D. "Traditional grammar". *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. 1995)

Després de llegir el text, contesteu les preguntes tot seguint les instruccions que es donen en cada cas. Totes les preguntes valen un punt.

Después de leer el texto, responda a las preguntas siguiendo las instrucciones que se dan en cada caso. Cada pregunta vale un punto.

1. According to the text, the main purpose of language is _____.
2. The text asserts that many believe that
 - a) the study of grammar is easy.
 - b) the study of grammar is difficult.
 - c) the study of grammar is not important.
3. Most Europeans must study English because
 - a) the language is used in business.
 - b) the language was widely studied at the beginning of the century.
 - c) English grammar is quite interesting.

4. Which of the following statements is closest in meaning to the sentence "It hardly comes as a surprise, then, that the subject seemed distant and unreal"?
- a) It is truly surprising that the subject seemed distant and unreal.
 - b) It is not surprising at all that the subject seemed distant and unreal.
 - c) It surprised everyone that the subject seemed distant and unreal.
5. According to the text, the influence of Latin on English grammar
- a) has been inconsequential.
 - b) has contributed to a better understanding of spoken English.
 - c) has been negative.
6. During the 19th century, the approach taken to grammar was _____ .
7. Which of the following sentences contains an expression that is a synonym of "regardless".
- a) Most people in Europe today, **regarding** where they live, must study English.
 - b) Most people in Europe today, **however** where they live, must study English.
 - c) Most people in Europe today, **no matter** where they live, must study English.
8. Change the sentence "Students had to master and correctly apply a classification system that was alien to English" into a passive.
- A classification system that was alien to English _____
_____.
9. According to the text, what are two differences between the way grammar used to be taught and the way in which it is taught today?
10. According to the text, why is it unfortunate that grammar is considered hard by many?