

## The Handy English Grammar Answer Book

**Christine A. Hult**

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*Useful to everyone from beginners to professionals, this is a grammar reference book that lives up to its title.*

With *The Handy English Grammar Answer Book*, Christine Hult has created a resource that lives up to its title. The book is packed with useful tips, sample letters and documents, and examples of how to avoid common mistakes. Overall, it serves as a convenient reference tool for high-school and college students, and a practical refresher for anyone who hasn't taken an English course in a while.

Hult, a university professor and administrator, organizes most of the book as a series of roughly five hundred questions and answers, divided into several lessons. For example, one lesson focuses on the proper use of punctuation and includes questions like "What are some common misuses of quotation marks?" and "How do I use a colon with an independent clause?" Other chapters address spelling, sentence structure, grammatical concepts, and mechanics.

The answers strike a nice balance between high-level explanations of grammar and style rules, and straightforward examples of correct and incorrect usage. The book also features photos with clever captions, and quite a few of the examples also add some humor to the text. Hult includes a few opening chapters that talk about the history of the English language, how it spread and incorporated words from other languages, and how English dialects differ around the world. These chapters include sidebars with fun facts, nicely easing younger readers into the text before it shifts to a focus on grammar rules.

Along with general grammar, the book addresses the needs of different disciplines, with chapters about how to write for social sciences, the humanities, or business situations. Another discusses the impact of electronic communications on the language, and best practices for communicating electronically. The appendices are particularly useful. They include sample documents written using best practices, such as a resume, proposal, or business letter. Others include lists of idioms or irregular verbs, which make it easy to troubleshoot common problems. The variety of information included in *The Handy English Grammar Answer Book*, and the way in which it's organized, make this book highly useful for both beginners and professionals.

JEFF FLEISCHER (Winter 2016)

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