

Real English Grammar

Hester Lott

Marshall Cavendish Education

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Study this example situation: *Jim has found his key. Yesterday he lost it.*

Are you and your students tired of grammar books (however good) where the explanation of the Present Perfect v. Past Simple starts something like this? We don't know Jim and can possibly not work up much interest in his key, either lost or found. It's probably illustrated by a line drawing of Jim looking for his key yesterday and holding up his key in triumph today.

Would you find a text in the form of a postcard describing the writer's journey to and arrival in the Brazilian rainforest more interesting? Could a colour photograph of some Kayapo people be more intriguing than Jim's key? It might even generate some discussion, something that the key is unlikely to do.

If you are looking for a grammar book that's a little different, Hester Lott's *Real English Grammar* is almost certainly what you need. This British English grammar and grammar practice book for A2 – B1 level students is an attractive book, with lots of colour photos and illustrations and would probably appeal to teenagers as well as adults.

The layout is similar to that of most grammar books, with explanations and examples on the left-hand page and exercises on the right. The explanations of forms and usage are clear and show how the item is used in real contexts. In common with most books, topics are arranged in sections (for example tenses, nouns, prepositions, adverbs and adjectives) and there are Review Units at the end of each section, providing useful potential test material.

There are some differences between this and other grammar books. For a start, there is short text illustrating each grammar point which is read by native speakers on the free Audio CD included with the book. There's quite a range of accents, which helps students' comprehension of spoken English.

Both the texts and the exercises are in a variety of genres: articles, stories, dialogues, letters, emails, phone calls, interviews and even some advice on that quintessentially English pastime: gardening. The exercises do not consist of isolated sentences unconnected with each other, but instead involve looking at pictures or reading a short text and answering questions, as well as completing conversations and gap-filling texts. Unusually for grammar books, they include a few questionnaires and quizzes. As an added bonus, the numerous colour photos and illustrations make it visually pleasing.

One small grumble: the answers to the exercises are in a separate booklet which is attached to the inside back cover. Inevitably this comes unstuck and is easy to mislay, which could be a problem for students using the book for self-study or revision.

I've enjoyed using the book as a complement to the main coursebook and my adult Pre-Intermediate students are enthusiastic as well.

Lucinda Semeraro

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