



# ANTHOLOGY OF PROSE, POETRY AND FICTION

English Course Book for  
Undergraduate Learners

PART I & II



*Edited by*

**Dr. M. Suchitra Reddy**

Head and Assistant Professor  
Department of English and Foreign Languages  
R. B. V. R. R. Women's College



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# Foreword

Before starting to write this Foreword, I would like to congratulate the team of teachers from

R. B. V. R. Reddy Women's College for having put this book together. It is a commendable effort and our appreciation of the efforts put in should be placed on record. Not just this, this should become an enviable example for teachers in other autonomous colleges to follow. And teachers of this college will forever retain that PIONEER place for the good work they have done, nay begun.

Now let me briefly share with you why this is a unique experiment and how this helps both learners and teachers. During the recent past we have been talking about teacher as a professional. All teachers should strive hard to develop themselves as professionals. Some of the options open for this are to engage ourselves in classroom research or materials production. Teachers in this college have chosen the second option without ignoring the first. The result is the production of three useful books. Let us take a close look at their features.

The main focus of this book is to help learners learn English using literature as the base. This is not a bad idea, for literature is often defined and illustrated as the best use of language. When we say this, we also need to look at the types of texts chosen. Here the authors have done well in choosing the contemporary texts which belong to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This ensures that the language we expose our learners is not archaic and the usage may not be faulted.


The second major feature that attracts our attention is the simplicity of language and familiarity of themes. This helps in grading the texts in such a

way that self-study becomes possible. This point is further reinforced when we look at the elaborate glossaries appended to each text. Besides glossary, every lesson also has a number of exercises to develop comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and speaking skills. For developing writing skills, separate exercises are included in the appendices.

The fact that each of the books promotes self-learning, does not discount the need for a teacher. The teacher's role in the modern sense is perceived as that of a facilitator, who can help the learners with clarification where needed and monitor the discussions that happen in the class. Subscribing to such strategies is found in few places, and a group of teachers committing themselves to adopting such measures is worth appreciating.

Each lesson has a good introduction to the author, followed by a brief summary of the lesson. This point needs to be accepted as a new feature. This provides the learner with a bird's eye view of the text to be read. Given this summary, the learner is forced to anticipate events and happenings in the story, and thus keep the interest in reading the whole story or essay alive. This also helps the learner to see whether her understanding of the text is appropriate in comparison with the summary provided by the editors.

I wish the facilitators a happy learning time. The books promote good reading habits, and I wish this habit is sustained throughout their lives.



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# Part I: Introduction

The English Course is designed to prepare students to understand and use the English language effectively. Priority is given to help students build vocabulary and initiate them to current ideas and issues as represented in some of the best examples of English writings. Keeping in view the mixed group of learners the course aims to equip students with reading, writing and vocabulary skills for effective communication.

The content consists of Prose, Poetry, Short Story and Grammar. Each chapter has a Pre-reading section, the Text of the Lesson, Glossary, Comprehension Questions, Language Development Activities on Grammar and Vocabulary enrichment. The learner is expected to refer to dictionaries for language based activities. This book is developed as a learner-friendly manual where each unit is equipped with exercises based on the content, focusing on practical situations.

The aim of a successful learner is to learn on how to communicate effectively and also overcome the fear in written communication. Verbal ability is among the most important skills a learner has to possess. Throughout one's life in all kinds of situations from the classroom to the outer world, the opinion of other person would entirely rely upon one's communication skills. George Bernard Shaw in his address '*Spoken English and Broken English*', to the English Language learners of Linguaphone Institute, warns in a witty and humorous manner not to focus too much on acquiring a standard language skill as English language spoken in various situations and also places varies. There are according to him home manners, and company manners. In fact, in England itself, no two native speakers speak alike as their accent differs on account of their origin – Irish, Scottish, Welsh and so on. His advice to the learners is: “. . . . that if you speak (intelligibly), you will be understood in any English speaking country and accepted as a person of good social standing.”

Similarly, the other prose piece 'On Saying Please' by A. G. Gardiner is selected to teach

on the necessity of etiquettes in the present global world and also the benefits provided in certain fields. ‘*Girls*’, by Mrinal Pande focuses on the predicament of the girl child in Indian society. The poems ‘*Ode to Autumn*’ by Keats expose students to varied seasons and cultivation of land. Rabindranath Tagore’s poem, ‘*Where the Mind is Without Fear*’ exhorts the students to create a world where there is no fear.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Principal, RBVRR Women’s College for her help, cooperation, encouragement in the preparation of the Book with a view that it will benefit the learners’ skills in English.

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# Chapter 1

## Spoken English and Broken English

- *GEORGE BERNARD SHAW*



### Pre-reading activity:

1. Comment on the importance of learning English?
2. In which language do you feel comfortable to speak?
3. Is there a universally Correct English?
4. Analyse the difficulties you encounter when you hear foreigners speak English?
5. Examine is the difference between spoken English and written English?

**About the Author:** George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was an Irish dramatist, critic, statesman, orator and a household name wherever English is spoken. In 1925 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Shaw accepted the honour but refused the money.

George Bernard Shaw was born on 26 July 1856, in Dublin, to the son of a civil servant. His education was irregular, due to his dislike of any organized training. At the age of 15 he took up a job as a junior clerk. Shaw began his literary career by writing music and theatre criticism and novels. He decided to write plays in order to demonstrate his criticism of the English stage. Nearly all his writings address prevailing social problems; he presents the same in a comic style that makes the stark themes appear appealing. Shaw examined education, marriage, religion, government, health care, and class privilege. He evolved for himself a style marked by directness, forcefulness, wit and lively commonsense. He was regarded as 'a second Shakespeare', who had revolutionized the British theatre.

He expressed a strong dislike toward schools and teachers, saying that schools and schoolmasters are not popular as sources of education but rather prisons in which children are kept forcibly. During his long career, Shaw wrote over 50 plays. He continued to write them even in his 90s. George Bernard Shaw died on November 2, 1950.

**About the Lesson:** 'Spoken English and Broken English' is a transcript of a radio talk that was recorded in 1927 for the Linguaphone Institute. His favourite theme was the English language, the way it is spoken and the way it should be written. He felt that the English alphabet was inadequate and so campaigned for the introduction of Phonetics. His play *Pygmalion* focused in a satirical way how the differences in speech reflect class distinction.

In this talk Shaw refers to all the errors of the native speakers in a humorous manner. He argues that a foreigner in England would be quite comfortable speaking in 'broken English' as he would be more intelligible in comparison to the native speakers. He asserts that 'even among the English people, to speak well is a pedantic affectation.' Apart from this he declares that no two Englishmen can speak alike as their pronunciation differs on account of the regional differences. The talk can be divided into three major parts, in each of the first two parts Shaw makes a statement and in the third part he delivers a piece of advice.

### **SPOKEN ENGLISH AND BROKEN ENGLISH [Text]**

I am going to suppose that you are a foreign student of the English language; and that you desire to speak it well enough to be understood when you travel in the British Commonwealth or in America, or when you meet a native of those countries. Or it may be that you are yourself a native but that you speak in a provincial or cockney dialect of which you are a little ashamed, or which perhaps prevents you from obtaining some

employment which is open to those only who speak what is called "Correct English". Now, whether you are a foreigner or native, the first thing I must impress upon you is that there is no such thing as ideally correct English. No two British subjects speak exactly alike. I am a member of a committee established by the British Broadcasting Corporation for the purpose of deciding how the utterances of speakers employed by the Corporation should be pronounced in order that they should be a model of correct speech for the British Islands. All the members of that Committee are educated persons whose speech would pass as correct and refined in any society or any employment in London. Our chairman is the Poet Laureate, who is not only an artist whose materials are the sounds of Spoken English, but a specialist in their pronunciation. One of our members is Sir Johnson Forbes-Robertson, famous not only as an actor but for the beauty of his speech. I was selected for service on the Committee because, as a writer of plays, I am accustomed to superintend their rehearsals and to listen critically to the way in which they are spoken by actors who are by profession trained speakers (being myself a public speaker of long experience). That committee knows as much as anyone knows about English speech; and yet its members do not agree as to the pronunciation of some of the simplest and commonest words in the English language. The two simplest and commonest words in any language are "yes" and "no". But no two members of the committee pronounce them exactly alike. All that can be said is that every member pronounces them in such a way that they would not only be intelligible in every English speaking country, but would stamp the speaker as a cultivated person as distinguished from an ignorant and illiterate one. You will say, "Well: that is good for me: that is how I desire to speak." But which member of the committee will you take for your model? There are Irish members, Scottish members, Welsh members, Oxford University members, American members; all recognizable as such by their differences of speech. They differ also according to the country in which they were born. Now, as they all speak differently, it is nonsense to say that they all speak correctly. All we can claim is that they all speak presentably, and that if you speak as they do, you will be understood in any English speaking country and accepted as a person of good social standing. I wish I could offer you your choice among them as a model; but for the moment I am afraid you must put up with me-an Irishman.

I have said enough to you about the fact that no two native speakers of English speak it alike; but perhaps you are clever enough to ask me whether I myself speak it in the same way.

I must confess at once that I do not. Nobody does. I am at present speaking to an

audience of many thousands of gramophonists, many of them are trying hard to follow words, syllable by syllable. If I were to speak to you as carelessly as I speak to my wife at home, this record would be useless; and if I were to speak to my wife at home as carefully as I am speaking to you, she would think that I was going mad.

As a public speaker I have to take care that every word I say is heard distinctly at the far end of large halls containing thousands of people. But at home, when I have to consider only my wife sitting within six feet of me at breakfast, I take so little pains with my speech that very often instead of giving me the expected answer, she says, “Don’t mumble; and don’t turn your head away when you speak. I can’t hear a word you are saying.” And she also is a little careless. Sometimes I have to say, “What?” two or three times during our meal; and she suspects me of growing deafer and deafer, though she does not say so, because, as I am now over seventy, it might be true.

No doubt I ought to speak to my wife as carefully as I should speak to a queen, and she to me as carefully as she would speak to a king. We ought to; but we don’t. (“Don’t”, by the way, is short for “do not”.)

We all have company manners and home manners. If you were to call on a strange family and listen through the keyhole—not that I would suggest for a moment that you are capable of doing such a very unladylike or ungentlemanlike thing; but still—if, in your enthusiasm for studying languages you could bring yourself to do it just for a few seconds to hear how a family speak to one another when there is nobody else listening to them, and then walk into the room and hear how very differently they speak in your presence, the change would surprise you. Even when our home manners are as good as our company manners—and of course they ought to be much better—they are always different; and the difference is greater in speech than in anything else.

Suppose I forget to wind my watch and it stops, I have to ask somebody to tell me the time. If I ask a stranger, I say, “What o’ clock is it?” The stranger hears every syllable distinctly. But if I ask my wife, all she hears is “cloxst”. That is good enough for her; but it would not be good enough for you. So I am speaking to you now much more carefully than I speak to her; but please don’t tell her!

I am now going to address myself especially to my foreign hearers. I have to give them another warning of quite a different kind. If you are learning English because you intend to travel in England and wish to be understood there, do not try to speak English, perfectly, because, if you do, no one will understand you. I have already explained that though

there is no such thing as perfectly correct English, there is presentable English which we call “Good English”; but in London nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand people not only speak bad English but speak even that very badly. You may say that even if they do not speak English well themselves they can at least understand it when it is well spoken. They can when the speaker is English; but when the speaker is a foreigner, the better he speaks, the harder it is to understand him. No foreigner can ever stress the syllables and make the voice rise and fall in question and answer, assertion and denial, in refusal and consent, in enquiry or information, exactly as a native does. Therefore, the first thing you have to do is to speak with a strong foreign accent, and speak broken English: that is, English without any grammar. Then every English person to whom you speak will at once know that you are a foreigner, and try to understand you and be ready to help you. He will not expect you to be polite and to use elaborate grammatical phrases. He will be interested in you because you are a foreigner, and pleased by his cleverness in making out your meaning and being able to tell you what you want to know. If you say, “Will you have the goodness, Sir, to direct me to the railway terminus at Charing Cross,” pronouncing all the vowels and consonants beautifully, he will not understand you, and will suspect you of being a beggar or a confidence trickster. But if you shout, “Please! Charing Cross! Which way!” you will have no difficulty. Half a dozen people will immediately overwhelm you with directions.

Even in private intercourse with cultivated people you must not speak too well: Apply this to your attempts to learn foreign languages, and never try to speak them too well. And do not be afraid to travel. You will be surprised to find how little you need to know or how badly you may pronounce. Even among English people, to speak too well is a pedantic affectation. In a foreigner it is something worse than an affectation; it is an insult to the native who cannot understand his own language when it is too well spoken. That is all I can tell you: the record will hold no more. Good bye!

### Glossary

1. native: person born in a specified place, original inhabitant of a place
2. cockney: London dialect of English, native of the East End of London
3. dialect: regional non-standard variety of English
4. provincial: regional, belonging to a single province
5. ideal: most suitable, perfect

6. alike: in the same manner, form or degree
7. utterance: vocal expression, manner of speaking
8. refined: well educated, elegant and having good taste
9. Poet Laureate: a poet appointed for a life by an English sovereign as member of the royal household to compose poems for court and nation
10. pronunciation: the way in which a word is pronounced
11. accustomed: to be used to
12. superintend: manage or oversee
13. rehearsal: a trial performance of a play for later public performance
14. commonwealth: the countries of the British Empire
15. ignorant: lacking knowledge or awareness
16. illiterate: unable to read or write, not knowledgeable
17. confess: admit to a crime or wrong doing, to acknowledge reluctantly
18. gramophone: record player
19. syllable: a unit of sound having one vowel sound
20. mumble: quiet and indistinct way of speaking
21. enthusiasm: great enjoyment, interest or approval
22. warning: advise against wrong or foolish actions
23. foreigner: a person from a foreign country, a stranger or outsider
24. assertion: a confident and forceful statement
25. denial: refusal to acknowledge an unacceptable truth
26. consent: permission or agreement
27. confidence trickster: a cheat
28. overwhelm: over power, have a strong emotional effect on

29. pedantic: over concerned with formal rules and details
30. affectation: exaggerated mannerism, behaviour that is not natural, a pretence

### Comprehension Questions

**Answer the following in about 150 words:**

1. Examine Shaw's statement, "there is no such thing as 'Correct English' "?
2. Outline the information Shaw gives about the members of the Committee established by the BBC?
3. Illustrate the difference between are 'company manners' different from 'home manners'? Why do these differences occur?
4. Analyse the warning and advice that Shaw gives to foreign speakers of English?
5. Does Shaw wish to reform the British by ridiculing them and provoking them? Illustrate evidences from the passage to support your answer

**Answer the following in about 50 words:**

1. Analyse Shaw's selection as a member of the BBC? What was his role there?
2. Is Shaw an Englishman? Can he be a model of good English?
3. Comment on Shaw's model for correct English.
4. Detect the reason for Shaw's wife suspicion on him growing deafer and deafer?
5. Explain Shaw's views on the English that the people of London speak?
6. 'Even among English people to speak well is a pedantic affectation'- Analyse the statement.

### Language Development Activity

#### ARTICLES

An Article is a Demonstrative Adjective. Like Adjectives, Articles modify Nouns. They belong to the group of Noun Determiners as they are used before nouns and indicate the definiteness of the noun. There are two Articles in the English language – the and a/an.

The is a Definite Article and a/an are Indefinite Articles.

1. **Definite Article:** “The” is called Definite Article because it is used to refer to specific or particular nouns, it points to some particular person or thing:

He saw the doctor (Particular)

2. **Indefinite article:** “A or an” is called the indefinite article because it is used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns, it leaves indefinite the person or thing spoken of:

a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher. (Any)

“**A or An**” is used before a singular countable noun. The choice between “a or an” is determined by the sound of the word following the Article.

A is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound (even if spelled with a vowel, as in *a European*)

**Example:** A boy, a woman, a yard, a horse, a university, a union, a European, a unicorn, a useful article, a eulogy, a unit (sounds like 'yu,' which is a consonant 'y' sound) a one-eyed man, a one-rupee coin, a one-way ticket, (sounds like 'won' in which *w* is a consonant sound)

**An** is used before a word beginning with a vowel sound (even if spelled with an initial consonant, as in *an hour*)

**Example:** An ass, an enemy, an inkstand, an umbrella, an orange, an arm chair, an Alsatian, an American, an Australian, an idiot, an ear, an ulcer, an eel, an apple, an ox, an orphan, an ocean, an hour, an honest man, an heir, an honour (silent "h" followed by a vowel sound)

A and An are used: -

1. To give the meaning of ‘One’
2. To give the idea of ‘every’
3. With Proper Nouns used as Common Nouns
4. Before numerical expressions

**Examples:**

1. I have a car

2. It is an apple
3. Apples cost Rs. 100 a dozen
4. The train runs at a speed of 100km an hour
5. He thinks he is a Tagore
6. What a hot day!

## “The” — is used

### **1. When we speak of a particular person or thing or one already referred to:**

- a) The book you want is out of print.
- b) I dislike the fellow.
- c) Let us go to the club.

### **2. When a singular Noun is meant to represent a whole class.**

- a) The cow is a useful animal. b) The horse is a noble animal.
- c) The cat loves comfort. d) The dog is a faithful animal.

### **3. When we speak of things which are the only ones of their kind: as**

The sun: The Sky, The Moon, The Earth, The World

### **4. Before the names of certain books.**

(Of historical or religious importance)

The Vedas, the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Gita, the Koran, the Bible, the Mahabharatha

But we say: Homer's Iliad, Valmiki's Ramayana.

### **5. Before names of rivers, Gulfs, Seas, groups of Islands, Mountain ranges etc.,**

The Ganges, The Amazon, The Krishna, The Persian Gulf, The Pacific Ocean, The Arabian Ocean, The Philippines, The Alps, The Sahara, The Himalayas

### **6. Before the plural names of the countries.**

The USA, the USSR, the UK, The Netherlands

**7. Before a proper Noun when it is used as a common Noun**

- a. Kalidasa is the Shakespeare of India.
- b. Einstein is the Newton of Our age.
- c. Bombay is the Manchester of India.

**7. Before superlatives.**

The longest, the tallest, the best, the most beautiful etc.,

**8. Before Ordinal numbers in titles.**

Pope John the 2<sup>nd</sup>, King George the 5<sup>th</sup>

**9. Before Common Nouns followed by a Proper Noun.**

The river Godavari, The novel "War and peace"

**10. Before a proper Noun when it is qualified by an adjective.**

The great Shivaji, The immortal Shakespeare

The wise Solomon, The famous Napoleon

**11. Before names of musical instruments.**

The Violin, the Trumpet, the Piano, the Flute

**12. Before names of families.**

The Nehrus, the Gandhis, the Ambanis

**13. Before names of Ships, Trains, Airplanes, Rockets etc.**

The Titanic, the Krishna Express

**14. Before Abbreviations**

The U.N, The W.H.O, The I.A.S, The U.P S.C.

**15. As an Adverb with a Comparative**

The more they get, the more they want

*Anthology of Prose, Poetry and Fiction* is a learner-friendly English course book designed for undergraduate learners. Bringing together carefully selected prose, poetry, and fiction, the volume supports the development of reading, comprehension, vocabulary, and written communication skills. Each unit includes pre-reading activities, glossaries, comprehension questions, and language development exercises, making the book a practical academic companion for classroom learning and guided self-study.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Selected prose, poetry and fiction texts
- ◆ Learner-friendly academic presentation
- ◆ Glossary, comprehension and language activities
- ◆ Useful for undergraduate Part I & II learners



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