# Understanding Sentence Structure: An Introduction to English Syntax

**Christina Tortora**

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## DESCRIPTION

A straightforward guide to understanding English grammar

This book is for people who have never thought about syntax, and who don't know anything about grammar, but who want to learn. Assuming a blank slate on the part of the reader, the book treats English grammar as a product of the speaker's mind, and builds up student skills by exploring phrases and sentences with more and more complexity, as the chapters proceed.

This practical guide excites and empowers readers by guiding them step by step through each chapter with intermittent exercises. In order to capitalize on the reader's confidence as a personal authority on English, *Understanding Sentence Structure* assumes an inclusive definition of English, taking dialect variation and structures common amongst millions of English speakers to be a fact of natural language.

- Situates grammar as part of what the student already unconsciously knows
- Presupposes no prior instruction, not even in prescriptive grammar
• Begins analyzing sentences immediately, with the “big picture” (sentences have structure, structure can be ambiguous) and moves through levels of complexity, tapping into students’ tacit knowledge of sentence structure

• Includes exercise boxes for in-chapter practicing of skills, side notes that offer further tips/encouragement on topics being discussed, and new terms defined immediately and helpfully in term boxes

• Applies decades of findings in syntactic theory and cognitive science, with an eye towards making English grammar accessible to school teachers and beginning students alike

*Understanding Sentence Structure: An Introduction to English Syntax* is an ideal book for undergraduates studying modern English grammar and for instructors teaching introductory courses in English grammar, syntax, and sentence structure.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**CHRISTINA TORTORA** is Professor of Linguistics at The City University of New York, USA, and author of *A Comparative Grammar of Borgomanerese* (2014). She is the recipient of numerous awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation, to support the creation of corpus tools for investigating grammatical variation in American English.

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