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Chapter 1: Background

A. Basic Introduction

Hello, and welcome to DGP! This book presents an entirely different (although quite simple) method of teaching grammar. The method is called Daily Grammar Practice (DGP). This approach will work for you, but I highly recommend that, to avoid unnecessary frustration and possibility of failure, you read the whole book. I have made lots of mistakes while working toward perfecting DGP. The advice I offer in the following chapters is intended to save you the trouble of making some of the same mistakes yourself.

My promises to you:

1. I will keep the text part of this book short. If you teach English or language arts, you are very busy. I know this. I teach English.
2. This book will be easy to read and to understand.
3. The program will be easy to implement in your own classroom.
4. The program is effective for all grade levels and all ability levels.
5. If you use the program correctly, you will see amazing results.
6. DGP will help YOU improve your grammar skills, too.

Now, on with the rest of the book.

B. Why It's Important to Teach/Learn Grammar in the First Place

Students (and all people for that matter) need to have a basic understanding of grammar. If you're reading this book, you agree with me so far. A few years ago, I met an English teacher who told me that students don't need grammar; they need to learn to write according to "what sounds good." That's like saying we should all play musical instruments by ear. I hope that teacher never teaches my kids.

In order to help students write better and write correctly, we must all share a common lingo, and that lingo is grammar. If your students know and understand the lingo, you can tell them to use *who* for subjects and predicate nominatives and *whom* for direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions. If they don't know grammar, they'll look at you like you're nuts! If they know and understand the lingo, you can tell them to put a comma after an adverb dependent clause. If they know and understand the lingo, you can tell them that *lie*, *sit*, and *rise* are *intransitive* (notice the mnemonic device) and that *lay*, *set*, and *raise* are transitive. That's all you have to say. How can you explain parallel structure to kids who don't know grammar and sentence structure? How can you help them with their writing at all? Okay, you get the idea.

And besides, if you're going to speak a language, you should understand how it works. It's a matter of principle.

