

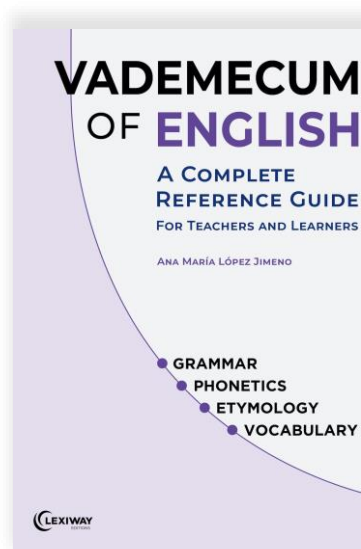
Vademecum of English. A Complete Reference Guide for Teachers and Learners

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Overview

The *Vademecum of English* is a handy reference book for both teachers and learners of all levels though particularly useful for those trying to master the language. It is not meant to be a textbook or workbook, but rather a helpful guide that clears up grammar, phonetics, vocabulary, and word origins. This book is organized in a way that makes it easy for users to look things up, which is great for teacher trainees, exam takers, or anyone needing help with specific English topics.

Structure and Content

Vademecum of English is divided into four main parts: grammar, phonetics, etymology, and vocabulary. Each section is densely packed with detailed explanations and examples, yet in a very practical, easy-to-process format. The grammar section covers everything from sentence structure and tenses to modal verbs and passive voice, with clear organization and visual aids such as charts and tables. For instance, the “Summary of Verb Tenses” (p. 42) provides color-coded cues that are particularly useful for visual learners. The phonetics section introduces readers to phonemes and articulatory features, supported by IPA transcriptions. As an example, the section on consonant sounds includes a clear chart of voiced and voiceless pairs, helping learners (specifically targeting Spanish learners of English) avoid common pronunciation errors (p. 112), and simplifying otherwise unnecessary complex phonological rules. The etymology section traces the origins of English words, offering both linguistic insight and historical context. For example, the Latin root *scrib-* is explained through words such as *describe*, *prescribe*, and *manuscript*, reinforcing word formation awareness (p. 177). Finally, the vocabulary section provides thematic word lists and notes on usage. The “Common Confusables” list (p. 201) clarifies pairs like *economic* vs. *economical*, often problematic for intermediate learners.

One noteworthy feature is the inclusion of *false friends*, idiomatic expressions, and morphological patterns, which are often overlooked in reference guides. These entries go beyond descriptive grammar and offer learners tools for navigating real-life usage. Another original inclusion is the etymological connections drawn across languages, which can help learners develop metalinguistic awareness and decode unfamiliar vocabulary.

Visual features make *Vademecum of English* easy to access. One particularly useful feature is the use of color-coded charts, diagrams, and summary tables throughout the volume, which make it easier to scan and retrieve information quickly. The explanations are concise but not simplistic, catering to readers with at least an intermediate level of English or to current and future teachers of English. The layout is clean and functional, with clear section headers, consistent fonts, and color-coding used to enhance readability. Icons are occasionally used to indicate tips, usage notes, or exceptions, which can help learners navigate independently. Compared to other grammar reference books, finding the information you are looking for in this volume is rather straightforward.

Pedagogical Value

Vademecum of English stands out for its potential to support autonomous learning and informed teaching, focusing on everyday language rather than complex linguistic explanations. While it is not designed around communicative classroom practices or interactional activities, it effectively complements such approaches by reinforcing underlying rules and structures through clear and accurate explanations that are accessible to all learners and educators, not just expert linguists. In this sense, it serves a role similar to a grammar and usage reference book (such as *Practical English Usage* by Swan), but in a more concise, straightforward format and with added value from its sections on etymology and phonetics.

As a teacher educator and researcher, I appreciate how accessible and reliable the book is in terms of its content. It also supports multilingual awareness, as it provides occasional comparisons with Spanish and other Romance languages, which can help learners in multilingual classrooms. In a classroom context, *Vademecum of English* would be most effective as a supplementary resource rather than a core text. Teacher trainees could benefit from its grammar explanations when preparing micro-teaching sessions, while learners studying for proficiency exams (such as the Cambridge C1 or C2) might use it to clarify usage and pronunciation doubts.

Final Thoughts

While *Vademecum of English* may not replace textbooks or teaching methodologies grounded in communicative competence, it is a solid and welcome addition to the bookshelf of anyone working with or studying the English language in depth. Its value lies in its clarity,

scope, and versatility—whether for quick consultations, lesson preparation, or in-depth study.

While beginners might find some entries dense, intermediate to advanced users will appreciate the precision and detail. It is especially recommended for future English teachers, exam takers, and language professionals who value accuracy and clarity. The index is detailed and well-structured, allowing users to locate specific grammar or vocabulary topics quickly. In addition, the clarity of explanations and use of visual scaffolds make the material accessible without external guidance, encouraging independent exploration.

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