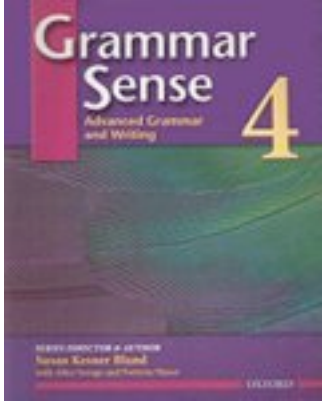


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Grammar Sense 4, Advanced Grammar and Writing			
Author:	Alice Savage and Patricia Mayer Susan Kesner Bland, Series Editor (2008)		
Publisher:	Oxford: Oxford University Press		
Pages	ISBN	Price	
Pp. xv + 300	978-0-194-49017-7 (Student Book, paper)	£20.50 UK	
Additional Components			
Pages	ISBN	Price	Author
Pp. xiii + 84	978-0-194-49038-2 (Teacher's Book, paper)	£22.00 UK	Cathrine Dalton
Pp. 109	978-0-194-49020-7 (Workbook, paper)	£13.00 UK	Laura Chamberlin
Audio CD	978-0-194-49024-5	£30.00 UK	
Assessment CD	978-0-194-49030-6	£60.00 UK	

Grammar Sense is a four-level grammar series that focuses on how grammar is used to create meaning in discourse. The course is designed around the principle that “learning grammar is a developmental process that occurs gradually,” and therefore, “careful sequencing, systematic repetition, recycling, review, and expansion” is required in order to promote grammatical awareness and fluency (*Grammar Sense*, 2008). These same principles are reflected in the overall structure of the course, with the four levels of the course taking students from Level 1, a very basic level which focuses on giving students an elementary understanding of form, meaning and use, up until Level 4, which is focused on grammar and writing as used in academic discourse. Right from Level 1, students are introduced to grammar in both spoken and written discourse, with Levels 1 and 2, focusing mainly on

language use in general discourse, and Levels 3 and 4, focusing more on language use in written academic discourse. The books can be used in sequence, or individually as required.

At first glance, *The Grammar Sense 4 Student Book* doesn't seem very attractive, given that it is entirely in purple and black font with no illustrations. However, what the book lacks in aesthetics, it makes up for in quality content and structure. Each chapter is divided into various sections and usually begins by introducing a target structure/s through an authentic reading text. The texts are easy to exploit as; the target structures are highlighted, difficult vocabulary items are given afterward with their definitions, and pre-reading and post-reading questions are provided together with inductive focus on form exercises. The subjects of the introductory texts are suitable for an academic learning environment, and the texts are also recorded onto the course CD. This gives creative teachers more ways to introduce the students to the target structure.

The introductory text is usually followed by a grammar explanation, which generally consists of more inductive exercises followed by clear and concise in-depth explanations of the structure/s in question. Practice then follows in the form of listening exercises, which encourage students to listen for, and be able to identify the form in use, as well as a variety of grammar exercises that focus both on both form and meaning in use. Next come the productive skills, with a small section on Spoken Skills, followed by the section on Writing, which for me is the real strength of the book. Anyone teaching Academic Writing to students who have a weak understanding of advanced grammar and academic written discourse will find the writing section of every chapter a boon. The Writing sections include: Editing exercises where students learn to look out for the most common errors and to edit their own work; A section called *Beyond the Sentence*, where models of how the target structure is used in extended discourse are presented and analyzed; Writing Tips and Writing Checklists which advise students on things to check and look out for in their writing; and, finally, a section called, *Beyond the Classroom*, where students are asked to find examples of the target structures in authentic discourse use outside of the classroom.

The Appendices (A-1 to I-8) include a good Grammar Reference, Glossary of Terms and Index. My only complaint with this book, and most other grammar books, is that the Student Book does not have answer keys for students to refer to. This means that teachers have to go over all the answers with their students. However, given that contact teaching time is usually limited and that there is usually never enough time to go over all the exercises in any textbook, isn't it about time that teachers could refer students to the back of the book, or an accompanying website where they could check their answers? From experience, once students have invested and paid money for a textbook, they feel they need to do every exercise in the book to get value out of it. They often get frustrated if all the answers aren't given in class. If the answers and accompanying explanations were available on-line, students could make better use of the exercises that their teachers set as homework and do not have time to cover in class.

Although I highly recommend the Student Book, I am not sure that the Teacher's Book is worth twenty-two pounds. If I bought it, it would only be for the answer keys at the back of the book. Each chapter of the book has a standard three-page explanation, which offers suggestions on how to present and teach the chapter. For someone who has never taught grammar before, the explanations may be helpful. However, experienced teachers should not expect to find much new or very creative here.

The Student Workbook provides a host of additional exercises to accompany the Student Book. The exercises are varied and focus on form, meaning and use. The answers to the exercises are provided at the end of the workbook making it a good self-study tool.

The accompanying CD to the course is your standard studio recorded ESL CD, and it attempts to be as authentic as possible. The accents on the CD are mainly American, so a wider variety of accents, especially more 'International English' accents, would have been appreciated. Nevertheless, I find the fact that the reading texts also have an accompanying audio text useful as a resource.

A very positive addition to this series is the Assessment CD. This may seem expensive at sixty pounds, but for anyone involved in time intensive test creation, it is highly recommended. In less than five minutes, I installed the CD and created an advanced grammar test and answer key on modals with 40 items, including, true or false, multiple choice, answer completion and short answer questions as well as three possible essay questions. Each grammar structure covered in the book has a correlating bank of questions, which teachers can combine together into the test format of their choice using the Exam View Test generator. The number of hours saved in test creation, makes this CD a very worthwhile investment.

All in all, I found the Student Book to be an excellent course book in terms of quality of content, and Level 4 is definitely highly recommend for teaching advanced level grammar and written academic discourse. However, I feel the Student Workbook and Teacher's Book are pretty well run of the mill ESL books. Whereas the Student Workbook may serve as a good self-study accompaniment to the Level 4 course, the teacher's book has little to offer an experienced teacher except for the answer keys and listening transcripts at the back of the book. The Level 4 CD is a good support to the Student Book, but is limited in its variety of accents. Lastly, a very welcome edition to the series is the Assessment CD-ROM, which could act as a major time saver for teachers who opt to use it.

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