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Approaches to English Grammar
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Summer Reading Project

For this summer reading project you are expected to read one of two suggested books. They are:

O'Connor, P. and S. Kellerman. (2010). *Origin of the specious: Myths and misconceptions of the English language*. New York: Random House. ISBN-10: 0812978102

Schmitt, N. and R. Marsden. (2006). *Why is English like that?: Historical answers to hard ELT questions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. ISBN-10: 0472031341

Choose either O'Conner and Kellerman (2010) or Schmitt and Marsden (2006). You DO NOT need to do both unless of course you are so riveted by the one that you want to do the other as well. Both books are similar in several ways. Both books cover similar material. Basically, they introduce some of the most intriguing aspects of English language usage and explain how they these developed. Both books are written in a simple, non-technical way. And finally, both should be not only entertaining but also thought-provoking. In some small way they will hopefully get you to think a little differently about the structures and usage patterns commonly employed in English and that is a good start to this class. But they are also quite different. O'Conner and Kellerman (2010) focuses on vocabulary and really tries to explain the origins of some interesting aspects of word usage. Schmitt and Marsden (2006) looks are the development of a wide range of structural elements in English. As such, it is more grammar and form focused.

After reading either of these books students are expected to write up a short reaction paper of approximately 1200 words (A4, 1.5 spacing). In this paper the basic idea is to pick one or two major points that you want to make and use examples from the text (and beyond) to support your claims. Try to present your feelings about the multitude of claims made in the book clearly and concisely. Limit your discussion to a few major points and make sure you have clear evidence (either personal, or from other written sources) to back up your claims. Make sure you use APA format in citing sources and formatting references.

I hope whichever book you choose, it will prove to be a thought provoking read for you.

This is due the second week of class on September 14th.
Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.....